NEWS / A2 WORLD / A20 ENTERTAINMENT / D1 LIFESTYLE / C1

GMA's 8-day 4-nation trip via US costs ₱123M

By Christian V. Esguerra and Ana Aquino

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S latest trip overseas has cost taxpayers P123 million.

Malacañang said the eight-day trip, including the Washington stopover, was "worth it" considering that Ms Arroyo supposedly got investment commitments of at least $1.7 billion.

"You can be sure that those trips are being undertaken by the President with

GMA'S 8-DAY A4

Legacy owner now on hold order list

Octuplet fertility doc probed

Boyet de Leon frees green turtle back to sea

Best bets in time of want: Good loving, eating below P500

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, February 12, 2009 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 65 P18 www.inquirer.net

CONVICT Henry Calunag, aka Hank Jacinto, as he looks in police Most Wanted photo.

Polo-playing Filipino, lover face more charges

HONOLULU—A MAN SERVING A 20-year sentence for stealing the land of a Kauai businessman found killed in the Philippines faces new charges in connection with a separate case involving another Hawaii man who disappeared in the Philippines 19 years ago.

In the latest legal action, Henry Calunag, 59, and his girlfriend Debra

POLO-PLAYING A4

Senate grill too risky for Mike A, say St. Luke's docs

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

THE HUSBAND OF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is skipping today's Senate inquiry into the alleged rigged bidding of World Bank-funded road projects.

Doctors of First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo yesterday advised him against testifying at the hearing by the Senate economic affairs committee, saying it was "too risky" for his health.

"They called the First Gentleman an hour ago, and told him: 'No go.' They said it's too risky," Mike Arroyo's spokesperson Ray Rondain said in a phone interview

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies and scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms while Luzon will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies and isolated rain showers.

Manila	Partly cloudy	Kalibo/Boracay	Cloudy with showers
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with showers
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with showers
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with showers
Puerto Princesa	Partly cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Mostly cloudy
Virac	Partly cloudy	Cotabato/Gen. Santos	Mostly cloudy
Catarman	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Calapan	Partly cloudy	Surigao/Butuan	Mostly cloudy
Dagupan	Partly cloudy	Basco	Mostly cloudy

Weekend Edition: Sun (4/5/2009) and Mon (2/23/2009) for Metro Manila • Sun (4/5/2009) and Mon (2/23/2009) for Luzon

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6/42 (draw results: 02/09/09)
16 25 10 6 2 4 4

4D (draw results: 02/09/09)
5 6 5 7 7 4 5

SUERTRES (draw results: 02/09/09)
8 3 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45 (draw results: 02/09/09)
5 6 9 16 17 38
₱11,799,914.40

Resado opens bank record to Palace

By Norman Bordadora

GOVERNMENT PROSECUTOR JOHN RESADO HAS ALLOWED the Malacañang-appointed independent fact-finding panel on the "Alabang Boys" controversy to examine his bank account at the Banco de Oro branch in Bacoor, Cavite.

The precedent-setting move by Resado, who has been tasked by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to prosecute the drug charges against the Alabang Boys, came as the panel was set to meet with Resado and Gonzalez on Thursday.

Resado's account, which contains about ₱900,000, was opened on Dec. 22, 2008, the same day that he drafted the resolution dismissing the drug charges against the Alabang Boys.

Resado also agreed that the bank representative testify on the deposits that were made to the account that he holds jointly with his wife.

"We want to make it of record that [Resado] has consented for the bank representatives to appear before the committee to testify on the deposits," panel member retired Intelligence Major Justice Raoul Victorino said at a hearing yesterday.

The President ordered the fact-finding committee to look into allegations that officials of prisons in Cebu had secured the mere prosecutors' dismissal of the drug trafficking charges against suspects Richard Brodett, Joseph Brown and Jorge Joseph.

The three-person panel, chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice Cardozo Cebu Jr., is now on its fifth day of hearings today. The other panel members is Fr. Rodolfo Aquino, dean of the San Beda College of Law.

Resado, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño and Senior State Prosecutor Phillip Ella Kimpo also took the stand yesterday.

They all cited parenthood lapses on the part of the PDEA that gave the prosecutors an excuse not to dismiss the drug charges against the Alabang Boys.

It was Kimpo who went over the resolution that Resado drafted and who recommended approval to Zuño. Zuño approved the recommendation.

"There are tremendous defects that are incurable," Resado said.

The PDEA yesterday defended the "integrity of the evidence" its agents had confiscated from the Alabang Boys even after they were not documented until nine hours after the suspects' arrest.

"The inter-agency gap between the arrest and the inventory of evidence was cited as one of the procedural lapses during the panel hearing.

In a statement, the PDEA said that the law "does not dictate that the items seized be inventoried and photographed right then and there at the place of arrest."

It said that last year's PDEA operations 24 hours to complete an inventory of seized evidence. With Dawn Quiao-ancla

Legacy head, 11 others barred from leaving

By Kristine L. Alave

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION has barred the founder of the failed Legacy Group of Companies and 11 other persons from leaving the country.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said the hold departure order was issued yesterday against Celso de los Angeles Jr. in relation to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' investigation of Legacy and of at least 14 additional financial institutions.

Also barred from leaving were Virgilio Celeste, Blanca Ong, Tarsilio Tiatchieco, Norlito Consulo, Jose Ildefonso Cameron, Rey Hilario, William Escalante, Rosauro Tuando, Ernest Jacob Sr., Jose Gregorio, and Emilio Aguinaldo IV.

Libanan said he had ordered the distribution of the order to all ports and seaports of the country. He also directed the submission of the names to the Intelligence Computer Section.

Legacy, which includes personnel from real estate banks, is the subject of a forensic investigation for its allegedly anomalous and fraudulent banking practices that left thousands of its depositors and clients empty-handed.

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Nograles allies plot coup defense

By Gil Cabacungan Jr

HOUSE SPEAKER PROSPERO NOgrales met with his key allies Tuesday night in the face of talk of a mutiny from those opposed to his one-year stay in office.

Around 23 congressmen were present during the closed-door meeting at a Quezon City restaurant called by Nograles purportedly to assess reports of a move to vote him out of power, according to a guest who attended the event.

The host-turn sources said some of the guests (form parties in the coalition coalition) confirmed that the coup talks were fueled by a crisis of confidence faced by Nograles, ejected by his perceived half-hearted control of Charter change (through a Constituent Assembly (Con-Ass).

Nograles confirmed there was a meeting, but added it was just a social gathering. He just met regarding the general set-up in the House after resigning to office for one year," he said in a text message to inquirer.

Nograles got into votes when he ousted Pangasinan Rep. Jose De Venecia Jr. from the speakership post in February last year.

Only 120 of the House of Representatives' 228 members can be cajoled to install a new House Speaker.

Congress had been abuzz with talks of an ouster move supposedly initiated by the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), with Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte and Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez rumored to be the candidates who could replace Nograles.

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Troops close in on Red Cross kidnappers

GOVERNMENT FORCES ARE CLOSING IN on kidnappers holding three Red Cross aid workers on Jolo island hostage even as negotiations for their release continued, the military said yesterday.

Germon holding Andreas Notter of Switzerland, Italian Eugenio Vagni and Mary-Jean Lacaba from the Philippines have been isolated inside a 6-sq-km area of densely jungle on Indanan town, said Brig. Gen. Nicodemus Mangilimen, chief of the AFP's civil-relations service.

The rebels, believed to be from the Abu Sayyaf group, on Monday clashed with government security forces maintaining a safety cordon around the area, leaving 11 soldiers wounded, Pangilinan said.

The Red Cross hostages, who were abducted on Jan. 15 while inspecting a water and sanitation project in the Jolo jail, were not believed to have been harmed in the fighting, he said.

Unharmed

"As of last report, they are still unharmed and were not part of the group that we engaged," Pangilinan said.

"The prospect of their being released is still there," he added.

He said the kidnappers had not asked for a ransom, but have publicly issued "political demands," including resources that would allow the predominantly Muslim population of the area to start "livelihood" projects that would create employment for unemployed people to earn a living.

He said that while the government was agreeable in principle, these were either political demands that were unacceptable, such as a military pullout from Jolo.

Gloria Montiny's clothes, the kidnappers have "moved to another area within the concerned area of about four square kilometers."

Sealed off

Pangilinan said military troops had "sealed off" the area, restricting the movements of the kidnappers.

He said the troops would observe the rules of engagement and would not open fire at the rebels unless fired upon first, and that the rights of all those involved would be respected.

"This is still a police operation... It's no different from any Metro Manila mid-level napping operation except on where they are, the number of people involved, which cannot be handled by any ordinary police force or military unit," he told the Fernando Forum at Club Filipino in San Juan.

The official said the troops on the ground would continue to apply pressure on the Abu Sayyaf group while their police counterparts would move to prevent diversionary attacks on the surrounding villages.

Pangilinan said an unspecified number of civilians living in the area have been persuaded to leave to ensure "no one will be affected in case fighting erupts." With reports from Bong Arce, Alexis Romero, Tetch Torres-Tupas, Jeannette Andrade, Christine Avendaño, Tarra Quismundo, Jaime Laude, Jerome Aning, Michael Lim Ubac, Alvin Murcia, Jhoanna Ballaran, Tonette Orejas, Alcuin Papa, Jeannette Andrade

UP janitor pay recomputed: P32,000

From page A1

did not avail himself of the sick leaves. But HRS Human Resources Division Office made it its position.

Zamora's plight struck a resonant chord among UP alumni in cyberspace, particularly those whose applications for student loans he had signed as a guarantor.

According to the CSC's De Lima, Zamora's records indicate that he has 80.041 unused leave credits with a cash equivalent of P32,820.75.

De Lima said the organized UP is to complete the figures based on available documents.

"To settle the matter, the CSC recommended to UP the payment of the accurate and records show that Zamora had received various awards from UP during his 41 years of dedicated service," the CSC said.

It also noticed the issue of "his transfer for consolidation."

UP Chancellor Sergio S. Cao approved the recommendation granting Zamora the cash equivalent of his leave credits.

Zamora may claim the amount from UP at any time, the CSC said.

Mixed emotions

Records indicate that Zamora retired under Republic Act No. 8291 for a five-year lump sum with premium after five years.

He has received this lump sum benefit.

At the end of his campaign to get what he believes is right fully his, Zamora has mixed emotions.

Speaking with the reporter in his humble home in Pook Estate on campus, Zamora said he was bitter over being awarded pay for 95 sick leave days rather than the 300 he had been claiming.

On the other hand, he is satisfied with finalizing the assistance that UP elected had been demanding so that since his story was made public.

"I feel a little bitter about that because it seemed they were doing everything to go around my claim of 321 unused sick leaves," Zamora said in Filipino. "I wouldn't have been happy with half of the numbers."

Zamora said he had attended committee hearings with CSC and UP officials to resolve his issue.

"At the end, my heart softened," he said. "So I will accept the amount. It's better than nothing."

He said he intended to put the money to good use in his small sari-sari store.

Since Zamora's story became public, donations have been pouring in from UP alumni, some of whom chose to remain anonymous.

"UP alumni are really good people," he said.

A concert to promote his CD of compiled songs was organized by UP students for his benefit.

"My CD was sold there, and it sold out," said Zamora, an avid guitarist.

Another UP alumnus, a doctor with a hospital in Quezon City, has also offered to treat Zamora's life-threatening high blood pressure.

"In the end, I just want to live a quiet life. Working pala. At least I was able to help the students [with their student loans]. And now I am thankful for the help given me," Zamora said.

First love never dies

From page A1

"Do you believe that first love never dies?" and "Do you believe or do not believe in the factor at one song stating that 'If you love someone three set him/her free, if he/she comes back again it's true reason to be?'"

The survey found that 58 Ignians believe to first love and its undying nature regardless of sexes, class, sex and civil status.

Men, too

Majorities in all sexes believe that first love never dies—59 percent in the Visayas, 57 percent in Mindanao and 52 percent each in Metro Manila and Balance Luzon.

Three out of five in Class B (360 percent), 54 percent in Class E and 47 percent in Class ABC also believe in the saying. 1000 said in a permanent relationship.

The survey also showed that belief that first love never dies has similar prevalence among men (56 percent) and women (54 percent).

That old feeling

The belief that love never dies tends to be more widespread among older respondents than among the younger ones.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents 55 years and older believe in the saying that "first love never dies," as did 56 percent among those between 35 and 54 years old, 53 percent among those aged 25 to 34 and 49 percent among those aged 18 to 24 years.

Fifty-eight percent of those who are married share this belief, as did 54 percent of those with live-in partners and 45 percent among those without spouse or partner.

On the other hand, 81 percent in Metro Manila believe in the saying that is meant to be, and 79 percent in Luzon outside Metro Manila, 78 percent in the Visayas and 74 percent in Mindanao.

By class, 79 percent of Class D, 77 percent of Class E and 78 percent of Class ABC also believe in the saying.

Across ages

Seventy-seven percent of men and 79 percent of women also believe the statement.

By age group, 81 percent each among those aged 25 to 34 and those in 54 to 65 years old, 78 percent among those between 35 to 44, 76 percent among those aged 18 to 24 and 73 percent among those aged 55 and older believe in the saying.

Four out of five among those with live-in partners (81 percent), 79 percent among those who are married and 73 percent among those who are single already believe in the saying.

The survey was conducted from Nov. 28 to Dec. 1 using face-to-face interviews with 1,800 adults.

The respondents were divided into random samples of 500 each in Metro Manila, Visayas and Mindanao, and 300 in Balance Luzon. The survey had a margin of error of plus-minus 2.3 percentage points. Kate Pedroza, Inquirer Research

Polo-playing criminal ...

From page A1

Anagnost, 51, were named in an indictment returned on Jan. 7 by a federal grand jury.

The indictment was amended on Monday the same day the FBI arrested Anagnost when she arrived in Guam from the Philippines, US Attorney Ed Buchingham said in statement Tuesday.

Cabang and Anagnost were charged with conspiracy to commit money laundering, four counts of money laundering and nine counts each of wire fraud and mail fraud.

The indictment accused the couple of fraudulently causing Arthur Spooner Young to transfer the title of his St. Louis Heights home in Sampaloc to fund a $50,000 investment in Cabang's helicopter sales business.

$80,000 commission

Cabang then persuaded Young to travel to the Philippines to accept an $80,000 commission on the helicopter sales, it said.

Young went to the Philippines in October 1999 and has not been heard from since. After Young left, Anagnost took possession of the house, where she and Cabang have lived ever since, federal said.

The charges against the couple don't involve Young's disappearance.

In 2007, Cabang was sentenced to 30 years for stealing the identity and land of Kuwaiti businessman Jaber Elmir.

Elmir disappeared in May 2000 while on a trip to the Philippines with Cabang. El-mir's body was found in the Philippines a few months later.

Cabang has not been charged in Elmir's disappearance or death.

Forged deed

But a state circuit court jury found that Cabang had forged a warranty deed to steal title to the property valued at $265,000. Jurors also determined Cabang used Elmir's credit cards to purchase cosmetic equipment just weeks after his death.

Elmir was a 51-year-old well-to-do investor and owner of a paint store.

His brother, Chris Elmir, has said Cabang discouraged him from going to police after the disappearance, saying Jaber El-mir had left the country voluntarily because he didn't want to be part of the family anymore. AP

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LPG COOKING GAS MUST FALL UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY

LPG cooking gas is a basic commodity.
Adequate supply of LPG is a basic consumer concern especially among our C, D and E economic classes.

For this reason, COPW is urgently recommending that LPG cooking gas be included in the list of basic commodities under the **Price Act of 1992 (RA 7581)**. The DTI, by authority of RA 7581 **must be the government agency to regulate LPG cooking gas.**

The Price Act, which created the National Price Coordinating Council chaired by the Department of Trade and Industry, has the power to **automatically freeze prices of basic commodities at their prevailing prices in case of emergency, impose a price ceiling if the price of the basic commodity is excessive or unreasonable or in cases of hoarding.**

Moreover, **DTI Secretary Favila during the last NPCC meeting held on 26 January, said that LPG cooking gas should fall under the scope of the Price Act.** The DTI, which monitors basic commodities, has the network to carry out this activity.

Therefore, COPW urges the House Cmte on Energy to write a provision in their LPG Bill that will **include LPG cooking gas in the Price Act of 1992.** And that this be sent to the Senate for concurrence.

THE WORST IS OVER AS LPG SUPPLY WILL NORMALIZE BY THE END OF THE WEEK

Based on personal experience and text messages from COPW supporters, **LPG cooking gas is now readily available at the retail level** at a pick up price of P575 per kg tank and delivered price of P635 as of Monday, Feb. 9th.

Consultations with Petron, Shell, Liquigaz and Total, the LPG Refillers Association and the LPG Marketers Association confirm that the **arrival of 22,000 metric tons will provide ample supply for February.** Weekly deliveries in March (March 7, 14, 21, 28) as announced, will ensure adequate supply in March.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday February 12, 2009
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sirach 27:30-28:9
Gospel: Mk 7:24-30

Jesus went to the border of the Syrian country. There he entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not remain hidden. A woman, whose small daughter had an evil spirit, heard of him and came and fell at his feet. She was a pagan, a Syrophoenician by birth, and she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter. Jesus told her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she replied, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the scraps dropped by the children's bread." Then Jesus said to her, "For what you have said, you may go home; the demon has gone out of your daughter." And when she went home, she found her child lying in bed and the demon gone.

Commentary

For the first two thousand years or so, Eve has represented the fundamental character and identity of all women. Whatever she might be and whatever her accomplishments, no woman can escape being identified with Eve. This perception of Eve has endured with remarkable tenacity, and persists today as a major stumbling block to attempts by women to overcome gender biases! Consequently, whenever she is mentioned, Eve must be unequivocally shot (female) is an inherently pejorative label.

The argument is that, for if you're doing a secondary or dependent being, Eve was in fact the culmination of creation. The order of creation, in which Adam was created first and Eve second, indicates that order, and, therefore, Adam's superiority (proves the fact that the animals) were created higher here. If Adam is superior to the animals, then the hierarchy of creation should be reversed and Eve should be seen as God's ultimate creation. At the time of creation, inequality between Adam and Eve existed only as consequences of distinctions; in other words, inequality between the sexes did not exist originally part of the divine plan. L. Aberbon Adams that attempts by women today to restore equality are in keeping with God's original plan.

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Senate grill too risky for Mike A

First page A1

dropping regular dosage at St. Luke's since he had a high risk open heart surgery in April 2007 after being diagnosed with a dissecting aortic aneurysm.

Most important part

Quoting excerpts from the World Bank report, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said that at least 13 witnesses had linked Mike Arroyo, remain officials and several politicians to the alleged collusion among contractors.

Lacson yesterday said he finally got hold of a copy of the "most important" part of the report that implicated the President's husband. "This is apart from the 18-page excerpts (of the WB report)," he said.

Lacson said apparent the architect(s) in the World Bank report consisted the transcript of the interviews and statements of 50 "interviewees/resource persons/witnesses" who talked to World Bank investigators.

He said he would present the attachments at the resumption of the Senate inquiry today.

Deny everything

Roxas said he doesn't expect Lacson had proposed a three-page defense statement and that he himself would present at today's hearing.

"It's a statement essentially denying everything and explaining the reasons for this," he said. "When a fraud is foisted upon you, you deny it."

On Tuesday, Roxas said his client was "healthy enough to play golf."

Attending a Senate hearing is more stressful than playing golf, according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"My gosh, playing golf, you remove the stress. You relax, and you roam our boulders," Ermita said reporters in Malacañang.

Vows to show up

In contrast, "When you're attending such hearing, the stress would be so much. That definitely can affect a person. It can even affect me. I've not gone through any operation," he said.

Ermita announced that Secretaries Hermogenes Ebdane of public works, Margarito Teves of transportation and Rolando Andaya of budget had been ordered to attend today's Senate hearing.

"They attend as nobody. They themselves volunteered to appear. So we will not prevent them from appearing. They've confident they can handle themselves, and answer questions that will be propounded during the Senate hearing," he told reporters in a briefing.

Webcast

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, chair of the Senate committee on public order, has invited 21 people for today's hearing.

To make the appearance of the President's husband before the Senate "less stressful," Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano suggested that he shed light on the alleged rigged bidding of projects via a webcast.

"At least we can ask the questions. Then I will see that's stressful? If the boss of security are stressful for the First Gentleman, then don't put a monitor in front of him. But at least we would be able to ask the questions, to follow up and to see his reaction," Cayetano said.

Cayetano joined this idea after several senators appeared to be resigned to the nonappearance of the First Gentleman at the hearing.

The senator pointed out that it was not the first time that the President's husband had been dragged into corruption issues. His alleged involvement in the ZTE deal—the other one, but he is seen involved in both," Cayetano said.

The militant fabulous group Pamalakaya-ucolhed as Mike Arroyo's flimsy reasons for skipping the hearing.

"Enough of disrespects and face the Senate probe. The First Gentleman is legally conniving, politically and morally obliged to face the investigation because the issue involves the presidency, the Filipino nation at interest and the people's conscience," Pamalakaya secretary general Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

Gutierrez, Pichay, too

Among those who said they were attending today's hearing are Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, former Bataan del Sur Rep. Florencio Pichay and Public Works Assistant Director Augusto "Tito" Mirmida.

Mirmida was named in the report as among those allegedly "who work to manipulate the bidding" of the road projects.

Lacson said Mike Arroyo should be among the alleged men in the World Bank report as he believed that the plot of the latter's lawyers to submit a mere affidavit was not enough.

"An affidavit is always self-serving. What he says would just be that. If his affidavit is not even made to undermine the allegations against him, that's his problem," he said.

This ex-Lacson aside clear he did not link or identify Pichay as being involved in the rigged bidding and thought the former congressman, who apparently had made statements against him, was "barking up the wrong tree."

"It's only now I am mentioning his name, precisely because in the document, it was not Pichay that was written there but, 'Pichy'" and that was why I did not mention his name," he said. With reports from Jayson Aquino and Michael Lim Ubac

DIRTY LAUNDRY? On one side of the Paulo house is the garage and driveway where the family's cars are parked side by side. MIKE ALQUINTO

Wanted 'bagman' arrested at St. Luke's

From page A1

will be brought to the Senate where the Senate physician will also check his condition," Topacio added.

Before going to St. Luke's, the Senate arresting team dashed out Pimlico house in Forever Gold Executive Village, Barangay Bitaugan, Sapote City, starting at around 5:15 a.m. yesterday.

On Tuesday, the Senate blue ribbon committee declared Dado in contempt and ordered his arrest and detention for three days at the Manny Villar jail for "contemptuous" and "contumacious" behavior when he appeared at the Senate on Jan. 26.

Heart problems

Topacio said that before he ordered the arresting team at Pimlico house, he was in contact with Senate Sergeant at Arms Jose Balajadia on the phone.

Topacio said he recognized the members of the Senate arresting team led by Senior Gil Valdez in St. Luke's, where Carmona "advised them that Mr. Dado had to stay overnight until late afternoon for a series of tests, including a myocardial problem scan."

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According to Topacio, Dado went to the hospital on Tuesday night because he felt chest pains when he heard that the Senate had issued a warrant for his arrest.

"Where are heard about the arrest order—he was out of town in Bataan—our commander said with each other and we advised him to come back to Manila and face this arrest order, like what I provided our close assurance," Topacio said.

"But because of his history of medical troubles, when he was nearing Manila he felt some chest pains and he decided to proceed [to St. Luke's]," the lawyer added.

No spring chicken

Topacio said Dado's medical condition, particularly his heart problem, had been documented since 1999 at St. Luke's.

"It's understandable to feel tension when you have a pending arrest warrant. Mr. Dado is no longer a spring chicken and Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Jose Balajadia has been his doctor for a long time," Topacio said.

He said it would be up to Carmona to decide if Dado should stay longer at the hospital.

Asked about comments that his stay at St. Luke's would be a ploy to escape arrest, Topacio said that all the other Senators with Senta Manilena Ayroso who got sick and arrested a Senate hearing, Dado detained the blue ribbon committee hearing on Jan. 26 before having himself admitted at St. Luke's.

"And his timing is not good because we'll be celebrating Philippine's day] on Feb. 14, and he has a heart ailment," Topacio said.

He said he and his colleagues would challenge the legality of the Senate arrest orders and file a petition of habeas corpus today in the Supreme Court.

"We reserve our right to file whatever judicial remedies we feel are appropriate at the moment. With all due respect to the senators, we disagree with their findings that Mr. Paulo should be punished for allegedly lying under oath," Topacio said.

He described the arrest order as "punitive," and said Paulo should undergo a process similar to a criminal proceeding where his side would be heard and he would be allowed to present his evidence.

11-vehicle convoy

The search for Paulo began before 5 p.m. yesterday with an 11-vehicle convoy—the lead two vehicles from the Senate and the rest from the media—going down Edsa and Ortigas from the Senate at 3:30 p.m. to beat the early morning rush.

The arresting team arrived at Paulo's house at around 6:15 a.m. after stopping at a police precinct to coordinate with local authorities.

No one answered from the house despite the team members' calls. A few minutes later, one of Paulo's daughters, Sheryl, who was carrying a plastic bag of bread, arrived and said her father was not home.

Col. Jaime Dimanlig, the head of the arresting team, said he and his men would not leave the area that way. He said they would arrest Paulo once they had a visual confirmation that the businessman was inside.

"We'll wait here until he comes up. If he doesn't show up for a week or a month, we'll also wait for that long," Dimanlig declared.

Still Christmas

A neighbor of Paulo's said the businessman's family moved in between 2003 and 2004 and made improvements on the large, two-story house.

Some Christmas decorations and a big statue of Santa Claus could also be seen outside the house, leading Dimanlig to comment that the family apparently had not celebrated the holidays.

Before Paulo, a former broadcast journalist and his family purportedly stayed for a year in the house, which neighbors estimated to cost around P6-7 million.

A reporter for Dado said in a Paulo's neighborhood surveillance more than 200 square meters. The size of the businessman's residence occupies two lots.

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Ties that bind a string of scandals

From page A1

bill sought to grant ABC Wireless Incubator Network a franchise to build a nationwide wireless telecommunication system.

Rodriguez later admitted to the Senator blue ribbon committee that she had no direct knowledge of the alleged bribery.

Alleged misuse of PCSO funds

In October 2003, Sen. Panfilo Lacson accused Mike Arroyo of urging the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) to release P500 million in advertising funds, and of using the money to finance the campaign of four administration candidates in the May 2004 senatorial election.

Lacson identified his informant as Robert Ravens, former model-consultant of the PCSO.

The Office of the Ombudsman conducted an investigation but suspended its probe after Ravens reportedly failed to submit some his charges.

Jose Pidal accounts

Lacson struck again in August 2005, this time saying that Mike Arroyo had amassed more than P200 million from contributions to his wife's vice presidential campaign in 1998 and had deposited the money in secret bank accounts, one of which was under the name Jose Pidal.

In the Senate inquiry that followed, Mike Arroyo's brother, Ignacio Arroyo Jr., claimed ownership of the Jose Pidal account and repeatedly invoked his right to privacy. He had not yet been elected congressman.

'Juetang'

Then-confirmed "Juetang" bag men testified in the Senate in June 2006 that the President's husband was involved in the lucrative illegal numbers game.

Retired Supreme Court Justice Artemio Panganiban, former presidential assistant for local affairs, Hermogenes Ebdane, Jr., former undersecretary of budget, had been named to attend today's Senate hearing.

"They attend as nobody. They themselves volunteered to appear. So we will not prevent them from appearing. They've confident they can handle themselves, and answer questions that will be propounded during the Senate hearing," he told reporters in a briefing.

Webcast

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, chair of the Senate committee on public order, has invited 21 people for today's hearing.

"THE FIXER" To say militant groups abuse the President's husband whose image they use in their money and graft with red paint on Wednesday. The demonstrators claim First Gentleman Mike Arroyo is the person behind the major corruption scandals that have rocked the country. RICHARD VISCONDE

Cayetano joined this idea after several senators appeared to be resigned to the nonappearance of the First Gentleman at the hearing.

The senator pointed out that it was not the first time that the President's husband had been dragged into corruption issues. His alleged involvement in the ZTE deal—the other one, but he is seen involved in both," Cayetano said.

The militant fabulous group Pamalakaya-ucolhed as Mike Arroyo's flimsy reasons for skipping the hearing.

"Enough of disrespects and face the Senate probe. The First Gentleman is legally conniving, politically and morally obliged to face the investigation because the issue involves the presidency, the Filipino nation at interest and the people's conscience," Pamalakaya secretary general Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

Gutierrez, Pichay, too

Among those who said they were attending today's hearing are Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, former Bataan del Sur Rep. Florencio Pichay and Public Works Assistant Director Augusto "Tito" Mirmida.

Mirmida was named in the report as among those allegedly "who work to manipulate the bidding" of the road projects.

Lacson said Mike Arroyo should be among the alleged men in the World Bank report as he believed that the plot of the latter's lawyers to submit a mere affidavit was not enough.

"An affidavit is always self-serving. What he says would just be that. If his affidavit is not even made to undermine the allegations against him, that's his problem," he said.

This ex-Lacson aside clear he did not link or identify Pichay as being involved in the rigged bidding and thought the former congressman, who apparently had made statements against him, was "barking up the wrong tree."

"It's only now I am mentioning his name, precisely because in the document, it was not Pichay that was written there but, 'Pichy'" and that was why I did not mention his name," he said. With reports from Jayson Aquino and Michael Lim Ubac

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GMA's 8-day 4-nation trip via US costs P123M

From page A1

the interest of our people in mind," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters.

Ms Arroyo left Manila on Jan. 30 initially for a four-country outing that first brought her to Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum.

41-strong delegation

But while in mid-flight, she supposedly got an official invitation from the US Congress to attend the annual National Prayer Breakfast. Its guest of honor this year was US President Barack Obama, whom Ms Arroyo had been seeking to meet.

In arranging the last leg of the trip, she apparently had to make the detour in Washington from Bahrain when she should have been heading back to Manila.

Still, Ermita said the stop should be seen from the perspective of how much Ms Arroyo had obtained for the country amid the global recession.

Of Ms Arroyo's official delegation of 41, about 20 went with her to Washington, he said.

From the US trip alone, Ms Arroyo got the American textile industry to agree to accommodate some $1.2 billion worth of Philippine textile exports "over a period of time," Ermita said.

Ms Arroyo also got pledges of $200 million and $300 million from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, respectively, for "agricultural production."

Bandilihan, Bahrain Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa committed to invest in a hotel in Makati worth $200 million to $400 million, according to Ermita.

"I mention this because if we do not give you these figures, the media people might think that there people might think that again [Malacañang is] squandering people's money," he said.

Ermita said the Philippines could not quantify what it would get from the approval of the veterans' bill and the good will that Ms Arroyo earned while Ms Arroyo meeting US Sen. John Kerry and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The bill, included in Obama's stimulus package, would give a lump sum amounts to surviving Filipinos who fought with American forces in World War II.

The 30-minute meeting with Clinton was the closest that Ms Arroyo got to Obama, who has briefly left Washington after delivering his speech at the National Prayer Breakfast.

At the morning, Ms Arroyo asked Clinton to include Manila on her first trip to Asia. The US secretary of state is set to visit China, Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia beginning this week.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney on Tuesday said Manila could no longer fit in Clinton's schedule.

Imelda sues PCGG for graft, estafa

MARICOR

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FORMER FIRST LADY Imelda Marcos yesterday filed graft and estafa charges against commissioners of the Presidential Commission on Good Government for allegedly selling some of her family's properties and corporations worth almost P2 billion even if they were not subject of any forfeiture case.

Marcos personally filed a complaint-affidavit against PCGG chair Camilo Sabio and commissioners Ricardo Abcede, Narciso Nario, Wenni Jacko, and Jaime Bautista before the Office of the Ombudsman yesterday morning.

The former first lady claimed the PCGG sold shares corporations to energy and mining worth P1.7 billion, as well as their mansion in Makati City that Juan City, Acapulco City and Batasan "even without judicial pronouncement that the same are ill-gotten."

She alleged that the PCGG ignored her requests for accounting of the properties and corporations involved.

PCGG spokesperson Nick Suarez refused to comment saying the office had not yet received a copy of the filed complaint.

LRTA bought new trains with no tracks for $81M

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT Authority (LRTA) is in hot water for buying 48 LS million worth of trains even though it has yet to expand the railway system's Manila-to-Caloocan LRT 1 route to Cavite province.

At a congressional hearing yesterday, Bohayan Rep. Abraham Mitra asked how the LRTA could extend its services when its current volume of riders does not justify the additional investments.

Mitra noted that the LRTA had proceeded with the purchase of the 48 trains — at $1.7 million each — though a loan package from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation — allegedly without the endorsement of Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

The congressman also noted that the new trains were meant for the southern extension of LRT 1, the plans of which have yet to be finalized.

LRTA officials at the hearing claimed Mendoza had appointed the chairman of the LRTA board, noting that it went through the regular bidding process with the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Pre-requisite to extension

They claimed that the purchase, meant to increase rider capacity, was a "pre-requisite" to the extension of train services to Cavite.

The additional trains have jacked up the capacity from 27,000 riders to 45,000 riders per hour per direction.

At the same hearing, Northern Samar Rep. Raul Daza said it was essential for the LRTA to buy the trains before finishing the extension because the tracks and stations are supposed to be built first.

He added that it was also questionable why LRT 1 would have more trains than the EDSA-MRT line that has more passengers.

Caloocan Rep. Oscar Rey, Manila Rep. Amado Bagatsing also chided the LRTA for singling out a Filipino train tracks, Filipinas Systems Inc. (Filsystems), in the bidding for the extension project that would link LRT 1 to EDSA-MRT.

Disqualified

Bodyguards said the LRTA had disqualified Filsystems for a "minor thing" [Filsystems submitted a notarized instead of an electronic copy of its income tax returns], but had allowed foreign corporations and other local bidders to place their bids even if they had also been remiss in submitting complete documents.

Philip Cruz of Filsystems told congressmen that the LRTA, which did not accept his bid, should have disqualified all of the bidders who had failed to comply with the requirements instead of targeting only his company.

Cruz complained that not only was Filsystems ousted out, LRTA also allegedly copied its copyrighted design for the LRT 1 extension for its unsolicited proposal in 2004 without its consent. Cruz said the LRTA used a design that took 18 months and P100 million to complete.

As the same time, Mitra revealed LRTA Administrator Melquiades Robles to the next hearing to explain allegations that he awarded in 2007 a P1.089 billion maintenance contract to a company that only had P8.1 million in capital.

'We're awash in cash, but...'

By Gil C. Cabacungan

THE ECONOMY'S MAIN problem is not the lack of money but how to make people spend the glut of savings in the country to stimulate business activity, according to the Social Security System's president and administrator Romulo Neri.

"We are awash with cash, the challenge is how do we use the cash. We have too much savings but not enough investment [are being] made," Neri told a joint hearing of the House committee on economic affairs and banking on the proposed P330-billion stimulus fund to help the country weather the global economic crisis.

According to Neri, unlike before when the country had to borrow abroad because of the country's low savings rate, savings have now jumped to as much as 26 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), or P600 billion. By contrast, investments account for only 15 percent of GDP or the total value of goods and services produced in the country.

These savings have been bolstered by the steady stream of remittances from abroad amounting to $17 billion a year, or more than P700 billion a year, in the past few years, Neri said.

Neri expressed confidence that remittances, mostly from overseas Filipino workers, would continue to be a steady source of funds for the country.

"It may not grow as much, or if it drops, it will only be slight because [even if OFWs] are coming back, they are not [dependent] on massive drawn but in trickles," he said.

He said the recent three-day drop in exports and layoffs in industry the country should worry about remittances drying up.

"Without remittances, we are dead," said Neri.

He said the government's main problem is how to harness these massive savings in stimulate the economy. He said this was the main reason why government was encouraging more private-sector investment in infrastructure and why government was itself borrowing from the domestic market to spend for infrastructure development and basic services.

Neri said the $10 has yet to firm up its commitment for the same new pension fund as was, without P12.5 billion in the stimulus fund.

"It is a good and secure investment with a good return, and there are still returns," he said.

However, he has rejected calls for the SSS to increase members' benefits because it would adversely affect the future of their investments.

Instead, Neri said the SSS was willing to condone penalties against members with delinquent accounts, which could amount to around as P10 billion.

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OPINION

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Kidnappings most foul

EDITORIAL

WHILE IT IS KEEPING TABS ON THE SITUATION of the three aid workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross abducted in Sulu on Jan. 15, the public should not lose sight of the reality that these are other people held hostage by bandits in the provinces and elsewhere. Other people with as much dedication to service as Mary Jean Lacaba of the Philippines, Andreas Notter of Switzerland and Eugenio Vagni of Italy, with their work similarly left hanging, and their families as gripped by a non-enduring anguish.

As local officials and military and police authorities plot, plan and position to wrest the Red Cross trio from the bandits' clutches, so also must efforts (not necessarily military) be expended to rescue Janette de los Reyes, Fredren Quizon and Rahael Mayorquia, all teachers of the Lamitan Goa Integrated School who were snatched on Jan. 25 while on a motorboat and are now being held in Muhammad Ajul, Basilan.

Think Sherwine of Leah Parris of the Kinuyanguan Community Development Foundation Inc., who was abducted on Feb. 3 in Isabela, Basilan, while she and her colleagues were heading back to their office after collecting loan payments for their microfinance organization.

As well, spare a thought for businessman Dicong Hin Qua, snatched in Sulu on Feb. 2, and nameless others (including a 9-year-old boy kidnapped in Lamitan, Basilan, on Feb. 11)—ordinary people suddenly flung into extraordinary circumstances, at the mercy of time and the elements, the perverse arrogance of banditry, and the pettiness of greed.

We must remember their names if only to prevent their lapsing into mere statistics and indifference of the configuration of violence in specific areas. We must imagine, to the extent possible, the state of the health of 68-year-old Que, Darrie in fear and trembling, the 9-year-old child crying for his mother.

It is imperative that we stay connected in their personal details—for example, that teachers De los Reyes, Quizon and Mayorquia had to take a motorboat daily to get to their students. We must ever be moved by such life-threatened and ruthlessly put on hold, if only to keep the outrage fresh. (And we must applaud Eldessar Guanera, a midwife marched on Jan. 28 in Akbar, Basilan, who walked and swam to freedom on Feb. 7.)

The fact is that the rash of kidnappings in the South shows the authorities' astounding inability to keep lawlessness in check. (If proof were needed, consider the kidnapping of Parris and her colleagues while the top dogs of law enforcement, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, were being given a countdown by the crisis management committee in Zamboanga City.) Or can it be that authorities are in on things as they happen?

That question became a conclusion in many observers' minds as early as the late 1990s, when issues regarding the culpability of military officials, local executives and Joseph Estrada's cronyinnes, to speak nothing of the suspected sharing of huge amounts of ransom between bandits and officialdom, were swept under the rug and left to fester. But as it is said that comes to a head sooner or later; the simmering questions ultimately surfaces.

Harmonized Independent of the Bangsamoro Women's Association has made a chilling disclosure of the extent of the crime and the impunity with which it is being committed: Many abductions have gone unreported, "with ordinary people paying as much as P200,000" for their freedom. It serves to confirm the long-running suspicion that kidnapping for ransom is a protected industry in a down-economy, trading on human emotion, and earning untold profit for the perps and their patrons.

"It's all because of money," Independent has said. Indeed, it is. Then so now, her question, which she directs at the military and police, rings true: "Why is it that nobody has been arrested in connection with the kidnappings?"

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Inhaling flattery

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"FLATTER FLATTERY HERE'S NO ORE," SUSAN Stevenson often said. But licit talk on a con was "Don't inhale."

Did anybody inhale after Education Secretary Jesli Lapus lofted on a loft handed compliment for Dane battling over studded cufflinks?

Lapus complimented former academic superiors Antonio Calipjo for his "inspiring no-child campaign against flawed books, the fracasses reported last day del Lapus how scholar? His department ordered officials to ban defective books that Go had pinpointed. Defensive publishers trotted out correction pamphlets, but those are often ignored.

"Some people pay a compliment as if they're paying a penalty." And Lapus' excerpt? Why didn't Go sit down with publishers? So suggested, after all his critique, "from after reading," included "lines of unpronounceable poetry taken out of context"?

Did I use context, "fatigua estupida," however fawned out additional mistakes in both grammar and fact in the "English for You and Me" language workbook for Grade 6.

Noah's family went on a vacation to the pyramids of Pisa?," the book asks. Pisany is an Ilocos Norte town, not a province. The country's best known "earthquake baroque church" a leaned dove. Construction of St. Agustine started in 1606. The church, completed in 1710, is included in Unesco's World Heritage List.

"The Tamaraw, who lives in Asia, is described as warlike people but most are friendly, peaceful and hospitable." the book claims. "They are completely armed only when they upon weapons around their waists. They believe in black magic, sorcery, voodoo and love potions. The forests, their Bible, forbids the cutting of dead trees."

Go's previous review noted complex of splintered primitives. "Make some simple for me?" the book reads. "Stone-tablets, bush! Booze!" Bobby shouted. He ran to his uncle. "Looked here, Uncle," he said. His uncle looked like an inventive man."

There are one hours that double up the word: "The engine of the tractor is charging." "Further equines independently." "A foreman washed hard as transport chief of the radio."

The new critique farms up more of the same. "Many can be learned from reading books." "He resembles the knight to a shining armor." "Under the level lay the soldiers, as quiet as a mice." "A smile is something that you give it away."

But what about "unpronounceable poetry taken out of context" that had Lapus all concerned?

"Love one another and let them capture / for life is short and brute is so real / the best the touch and moving canoe / And may God be the divine witness." "She lives in a place that is surrounded in mystery."

Wait, there's more: "I got a basically with flowers designed wings." "He lifted his and his remorseful loneliness." "The grass seems to smile at me." "From the birds laughed at him!"

"I am aghast at the education secretary's defense of errors in 'English For You and Me' as poetry," wailed Dr. Jaime Dingal To La Salle University Dean, who has a PhD from Stanford, adds: "Good heavens, I teach poetry—Shakespeare, to boot...and the register of the nuance is sleeping is not poetry, or verse. It's a stunted and grotesque metaphor. ... Therefore, noticed (Virtuoso) is support for Antonio Calipjo Go."

From Jhannisett, capital of Saudi Arabia's eastern province, Fred Ikeda e-mailed. Here's a quick translation of his message in classic Tagalog:

"I read, on last week's net page, your column, 'Linguicker! Or guilty?' I followed seven accounts of Go and his advocacy regarding textbook anomalies. From to grammar and facts, plain misinformation or any gung ek-ek in these textbooks can be traced to corruption in producing these books.

"Her value do journalism is 1% private and really want to confirm with station like these? Is it to mask citizens, like us, about unsavory things happening? is it to inform those influential personalities about unacceptable practices in public as well as private schools?

"How many times Ann Rosenoua, Jim Lomibao and Major Harrelson must be made to suffer? There are too many to count now. Add to that, journalists who have lost their lives because they wrote the truth.

"Will journalists, like you, write articles for citizens, like me, so we're filled with fury over what is happening at home? Or will Filipinos like you and me become 'injurious' or gullible' to these reforms?"

"Even those who resist being criticized can rise of the constant stream of complaints," the British Broadcasting Corp's favorite on "The Caddy" warns. "Sometimes, they wish the gadfly will accept life as it is, and just get on...But one thing that keeps the gadfly on his task is the knowledge he is right. And the world would be a much better place if everyone else realized it."

Antonio Calipjo Go and others painfully learned this: Setting a gadfly to rest is for the birds of hoax). "They must pick a cause they're passionate about," the BBC learner stresses. "Be someone with small victories in the beginning. And work up from there... They will have to resist against the current ... [but] they can take heart from all the gadflies who have gone before. Know that you're part of a proud tradition."

Hear our school kids settle for other Lapus' gift: defense of "unpronounceable poetry": "Stop, look, listen! / A car is roaring, too."

Meanwhile, don't inhale.

(E-mail: jmanilavoice@gmail.com)

Watch it again, Sam

THERE'S THE RUB

Comrade de Quiros

IT'S NOT "PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM," IT'S "PLAY it, Sam." Or if you want the extended version, it's "Play it once, Sam, for old times' sake. Play As Time Goes By."

That's a famous line from "Casablanca," one of the many famous lines there. "Play it again, Sam" comes from "Finely Allen. It's the title of his movie, a homage to "Casablanca," about an insecure film buff bathed by a Humphrey Bogart alter ego.

I don't know what my favorite love story is. Am I more than "Casablanca" is my favorite love-story movie. I fell in love with it when I was a film major. I was in my 20s and I found my activist debates raced completely, exposing a still beating heart. Since then I must have seen the movie a couple of dozen times, and each time I still succumb to its charms. I still laugh at its witticisms, which are a dozen a dozen. I still thrill to its romance, which is unrelated, if not torn. To this day: Being some time on the earth is not an excuse to feel dead.

The circumstances in which that movie was made are as intriguing as its plot, full of tensions and contradictions and serendipitous accidents of accidental accidents. Nobody involved in it thought it would become the hit it would be. In fact, most of the people involved in it didn't even think it would get done. Started in 1942, the film was rushed to take advantage of the Allied invasion of North Africa. A slew of screenwriters took turns writing the script, based on an unaged play, finally leaving behind Julius Epstein, his brother Philip, and Edward Koch. Director Michael Curtiz was an adult with flash about the stars; Koch wanted to emphasize the political elements while Curtiz wanted to focus on the romance.

It's one of those remarkable things where all the weaknesses conspire to some strange alchemy to produce strength. Being rushed, the screenwriters managed to produce a script brimming with spontaneity and wit. The dialogue is hokey (nobody talks like that in real life, other perhaps than Oscar Wilde), but the witticisms piled upon witticism somehow drives the story on grandly. Koch himself later pointed to the flash between him and Curtiz as the thing that energize magic. "Surprisingly those disparate approaches somehow meshed, and perhaps it was partly this tug of war between Curtiz and me that gave the film a certain 'boldness.' Was enough, the film has just the right mix of humor and pathos, gritty realism and outlandish sentimentality.

The black and white adds to the romance, the genre films employed on hyped Hungarians have to give it a black-dreamy look, making it my still largely unacknowledged heart to a small amount of nostalgia, a mythic romance-fullness. I can only imagine though how that movie struck audiences when it was first shown, which was in the middle of the World War II, with its theme of love and self-sacrifice blossoming from the muck of war and cynicism.

Everyone, of course, has his favorite line from "Casablanca." Singly, it has contributed more to enriching the English language than any other movie. The most famous are: "Here's looking at you, kid." "Play it, Sam." And "Round up the usual suspects." The last having virtually become the police motto in most parts of the world, chief of them our own but, alas, without our chiefs of police having the roguish charm of Captain Renault. But there's much, much more. Pretty much every other line in the movie is made of wit.

Some of my favorites are probably not the ear most and place: Sanlaw: "Perhaps if you told him I can the second longest banking house in Amsterdam." Sanlaw-ter: "Second longest? That wouldn't impress Rick. The leading banker in Amsterdam is now the pastry chef in our kitchen."

Upside: You know, Rick, I have many a friend in Casablanca, but somehow just because you despise me, you are the only one I trust." Renault: Rick, there are many vacuous sold in this café, but we know that you're never sold one. That is the reason we permit you to remain open." Rick: Vile! I thought it was because I let you win at roulette." Renault: "That is another reason."

Sober Retort: "At the banks of all illegal activities in Casablanca, I am an influential and respected man."

Renault: "Is that a serious offer?" Rick: "I just paid you twenty. I'd like to get it back." Renault: "Make it six. I'm only a poor corrupt official."

Renault: "How can you agree you are, throwing away women like that, some day they may be scarce?/ Rick: "When it comes to women, you're a true dictocrat."

Major Strasser: "What is your nationality?/ Rick: "I'm a drunkard." / Renault: "That makes Rick a citizen of the world." / Rick: "I'm another bloddim...here call of honor."

Rick: "This gun is pointed right at your heart." / Renault: "That is my least vulnerable spot."

Rick: "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

That's barely scraping the surface. I leave you to discover the rest of this gold mine yourself. But of course beyond the wit, as in the perfect fold of cheese in the tomato, Bonnabarby, this was the movie that romance made for bad played only gangsters before). And there were not a few critics who said he played the tough guff corner better than the jilted lover. But it was probably this very contradiction that gave some depth to his performance, the already mine of actors of lower made more crystal by being the barely surviving victim of corruption, rising to heroic still saw like through the tongs of love. Well, you see Ingrid Bergman here, and, like Woody Allen, you'll harbor a Humphrey Bogart alter ego, too. You don't fall in love with her, you have poor taste.

All in all, this was just one of those impressive things that for some strange, or magical, reason came together.

A whole for like love.

Shift to CFLs and avert second BNPP disaster

RECENT TRANSBOUNDARY DISASTERS AROUND the world have only succeeded in driving home the urgency of addressing climate change and global warming—and the food security problem in their wake. Blame the rampaging floods in Australia's northeast and the killer bush fires in the south, the severe drought in Argentina and Brazil, the worst storms that recently battered the United Kingdom. These natural calamities are being blamed on climate change.

In an interview we taped for dzRH this Sunday at 9 p.m., Presidential Adviser on Global Warming and Climate Change Sebastian Alvarez stressed that increasingly severe natural disasters and the ever-spiraling of oil prices make it more imperative than ever to develop clean, renewable energy resources. But for developing countries, most encouraging development the successful founding conference and first session of the preparatory commission of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Bonn, with the Philippines as one of the signatories. Some 75 countries and 40 organizations led by Germany would hasten finally agreed to create this new international agency to push the development and use of renewable, climate and resource-friendly technologies; development of the untold, such as wind, solar, hydropower and biomass energy. IRENA will act as a reliable advisor and partner for its members, networking closely with them, in the realization that, to quote Germany's Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, "only with global cooperation can the world achieve secure and sustainable energy supply."

* * *

Alvarez says Germany comes with good credentials to lead these efforts, and the Philippines, which is now being tempted to flirt not only with nuclear energy as a resurgent but with supporting the defunct-falsified "Mountain of Malaya," could learn a lot from it. He notes that Germany is the world's biggest user of wind energy, with 38,000 installed wind turbines now producing 6 percent to its total electric power. Germany also accounts for 50 percent of the world's total power from wind energy. It's not resting from the 18 terms of producing power from renewable sources and is fast closing in on Japan as a leader in the use of solar power as well. Together, wind and solar energy provide more than 10 percent of Germany's electricity and this is expected to double by 2020. What's good for developing countries like RP is to boot is that, as presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain repeatedly stressed in their campaigns, there are plentiful jobs in these new energy forms. In Germany 60,000 people are employed in the design and manufacture of equipment for wind and solar energy.

* * *

Alvarez joined the delegation led by Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, armed with the 10-15, the Renewable Energy Act, signed last month by President Macapagal-Arroyo and said to be the most progressive and comprehensive energy law in developing countries. It aims to accelerate the exploration and development of renewable energy sources. Right now, there's the Rangay Bay Project in Bicol. Soon, the first commercial-capacity wind farm will start to operate in Ilocos Norte, with a 15-megawatt capacity equivalent to the reduction of 82,921 tons of greenhouse emission gases per year. Moreover, the RP delegation carried GRPB support for an 80 percent reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, first expounded by Alvarez at the 2007 Climate Change Conference in Poznan last September.

* * *

For RP, the founding of IRENA is timely. As Alvarez puts it, "Hopefully it would draw us away from the temptation of using 'fear' both like technologies' like nuclear power, and develop instead alternative energy sources of which we have a lot." Speaking of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, which a group of Bataan members wants to operate without considering the state of affairs now, Alvarez opines that if the nation were to shift to CFL bulbs for light, and if the Bataan nuclear project were being implemented by the Department of Energy through a loan from the Asian Development Bank, about 300 MWs of electricity would be saved each year, which is nearly equal to the BNPP's capacity, but without the problems of site danger, expensive fuel, waste disposal, decommissioning, etc. I suggest that Alvarez begin his campaign for renewable-energy in homes, schools, offices, city halls and the Senate and Congress with the pseudo-line: "A shift to CFLs helps avert BNPP's second disaster."

* * *

Last Sunday, I wrote about the Cebu-based Pilomen's International League for Peace & Freedom (ILPF), which has started a campaign to save Sanctuary of the Cebu City landscape. Their major project is to clean up and restore Cutan Street, the country's oldest, founded by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1565. Interesting with the old Basilica de Sto. Niño, on up 32 historical markers that are now part of its "Heritage Walking Tour," at a cost of P15,000 per marker with sponsors. An example is the marker in front of Martires Plaza (across from Magellan's Cross), which reads: "Here stood the Sanctuary known as the Cebu Sanctuary, also called Santa Iglesia by the Spaniards and Simbahan by the natives." (The Tenth Marker) early death in 1906, his widow, Doña Remedios Inocencio Cuenco, took over the family printing press on the ground floor of their house in Pasay City and continued publishing books for students on their own right. Her sister Archbishop Jose Ma. Cuenco, the future Sen. Mariano Jesus Cuenco and Miguel Cuenco. From this last duo sprang Cebu City Mayor Tomas Cuenco.

Hilomenes could also cite similar markers memorializing the lives and achievements of many illustrious families who resided in the Walled City never mind if there'd be enough crusaders to their homes.

Remembering Fr. Abe and TLJ

LAST FEB. 1, I WAS AT A SPECIAL GATHERING of friends, comrades, colleagues and fellow inmates and mothers. The occasion was to celebrate the life of Fr. Carlos Alberto, SJ, whose first death anniversary was on Jan. 31. The venue was the new chapel and the cool environs of the Religious of the Good Shepherd in Quezon City.

It was also the occasion to launch the book "Fr. Abe: A Scrapbook," a compilation of personal reflections and reflections of those who knew Fr. Abe. The book was edited by Fr. Abe's younger siblings, Willie and Marilou, who also wrote their own pieces on their days (older brother) who was also in the seminary with Fr. Abe for a short time and I needed to get back on the ground. I still have the little that I used for that occasion. We had two days of Fr. Abe and no one ended up a Mary Jo.

Fr. Abe was known as a passionate theologian, life came down from his perch and got involved with the poor and those who worked among the poor. Church worker Jess Aguirre recalled: "Long before it became fashionable to talk about a 'Preferential Option for the Poor,' Fr. Abe was living it. He insisted that the real theologians are not perched on the hills of the Loyola School of Theology or in the Gregorian University in Rome, but people who are in the thick of things struggling, persevering, passionate and, again, fighting and dying for basic human rights."

Fr. Abe was one of the founders of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians and as such, he popularized grassroots theology, how to theologize or to speak, with humor, the refrain poor, workers, women and church workers. If he were a doctor (his father's was), he would have been called a barefoot doctor.

Church worker Inez Cacanan remembers: "This was mental bar time, many people were suffering from intestine and impoverishment, and my Christian faith, or my institutionalized religion, was orientated heavenward. Her son, however, turned in my embracing this new way of thinking: the understanding that faith and life in its totality are one—that the Christian faith must be a faith that is lived out in the DO, or the underground movement, or many points did. ... The role he chose to play was to give guidance and direction to those who were waging the one and the same struggle for justice and liberation in different ways."

Fr. Abe's metaphor" tells it, "We advocated ... a kind of activism that comes from the depths of a person's core. Without doubt, many expected Fr. Abe to join the DO, or the underground movement, or many priests

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Executive privilege: SSS after ZTE-NBN

LETTERS

THERE WAS PUBLIC OUTRAGE WHEN Mr. Romulo Neri, of the ZTE-NBN notoriety, was granted by President Macapagal-Arroyo executive privilege to avoid the Senate Session. The opposition was even as Neri's reward for his silence on the ZTE-NBN deal and blind loyalty to Mrs Arroyo. It was feared that Neri would also play deaf and dumb should the Arroyo administration decide to raid the pension funds, for political purposes.

It has been reported that P123 billion (yes, billion!) of SSS funds is being eyed "for infrastructure," as part of the "stimulus package" Congress, [illegible] which would be placed at the disposal of Mr Arroyo. Given Malacañang's track record in misappropriating tax money with shameless abandon and buying loyalties with generous "cash gifts" and other perks, we shudder at the thought that additional billions of money could end up in Mrs Arroyo's proof-deserted treasure. Mr Arroyo's continued stay in Malacañang beyond 2010—an eventuality, if shamelessly, prepared for by her trusted drumbeater Jesse Robredo.

And the worst part is, the times are here to account for all that profligacy in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in "executive privilege," which virtually strikes down any attempt to hold her and her underlings accountable for any act of malfeasance and corruption. God help the Philippines!

—STEVE F. STAMIRA, Esq.,
stevesbbl@yahoo.com

House members add to suspicion of FG link to contractors blacklisted by World Bank

THERE IS NO REACTION TO THE NEWS ITEM titled "House move done of First Gentleman." Business, 1/20/09)

Every time a scandal of homegrown proportions is exposed, the name of Jose Miguel Arroyo is almost always prominently linked. Such "frequency" would naturally lead even the uninitiated to suspect that he is the "invisible powerful person from Malacañang" who could be the power behind the so-called "Hello Garci" and Jose Pidal (no projects) to the Department of Public Works and Highways in collusion with unscrupulous government officials and persons of power and influence who are the beneficiaries of largesse from favored contractors.

From many gargantuan acts of corruption have been reported since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the presidency! We have had the multimillion-dollar NorthRail and SouthRail projects, the P728-million fertilizer fund scam, the botched P1.3-billion Connection computerization project, the aborted $329-million MRR-ZTE deal, as well as the distribution of hundreds of thousand of pesos to members of Congress and local government officials in the Palace mall, to name just a few.

And now, the members of the House of Representatives are showing clear of Jose Miguel Arroyo who is said to have links with contractor Eduardo de Leon of the E.C. de Leon General Contractors Corp., one of the nine firms blacklisted by the World Bank for corruption.

The House members, who are generally perceived as paid praetorian guards of the First Family, are now sticking their wagon against World Bank.

While we give Jose Miguel Arroyo the benefit of the doubt, this is reason to think that the World Bank may be right.

—RAMON BAYUGA,
GoRBayuga@aol.com

mobile news

Democracy's show window no more

TO FILIPINOS WHO STILL BELIEVE THAT the Philippines is a "show window" of democracy in Asia, it may come as a shock to know that the world doesn't seem to think so anymore. This is reflected in the article of Larry Diamond, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Freeman Spogli Institute at Stanford University, USA. The article was published in Newsweek's Special Edition 2009.

"In Nigeria, the Philippines and—once again in Pakistan, democracy is floundering amid massive corruption, weak government and loss of public faith," wrote Diamond. "Since the wave of the democratic wave [in the 1990s], 24 states have reverted to authoritarian rule — and 12 are seriously the definitions of democracy): Nigeria and the Philippines as well. "On the other hand, "Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, has become a robust democracy nearly a decade after its turbulent transition from authoritarian rule."

Diamond's article confirmed what Steven Rogers wrote more than four years ago in "Open Democracy," a publication of the School of Science, City University of London. Rogers observed that President Macapagal-Arroyo was "fighting for survival" due to such as corruption, vote-rigging and media repression. "The crisis threatens to undo one of the developing world's longest running experiments in democracy, and bears examination by proponents of democratic transition everywhere," said Rogers.

In short, the Arroyo administration has shattered the Philippine image as a "show window," a paradigm and "model" of democracy for emerging countries. This is due to the administration's perceived corruption, rampant violation of human rights and bad governance, all of which have spread poverty to more than 40 percent of Filipinos (according to the CIA), the highest in Asia, next only to Bangladesh. Consequently, US President Barack Obama, who has told authoritarian and corrupt leaders that they are in "the wrong side of history" in his inaugural speech, is not expected to look kindly to the Arroyo administration.

The image of the Philippines as a "show window" of freedom and democracy for developing countries after the 1986 overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship has been crushed in just eight years by the Arroyo administration. Quite an "achievement." It took Marcos 40 years to do it.

—MANUEL L. QUEZON III
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Rapist must go to Muntinlupa, says Enrile

By Leila B. Salaverria

SENATE PRESIDENT JUAN Ponce Enrile yesterday backed the Supreme Court's decision ordering that Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, the American rapist of "Nicole," should be held in a Philippine facility.

"Well, if he committed a crime under Philippine law, then he must, like all persons charged with a crime under Philippine law, go to [the national penitentiary in] Muntinlupa," Enrile told reporters, adding:

"No matter's no exception for Mr. Smith. He must go to Muntinlupa."

Zambales Rep. Milagros Magsaysay, one of the first to come to Nicole's aid when she complained of rape, said the US government should respect the high court's decision because Filipinos who committed wrongdoing in the United States were penalized under US laws.

Asked whether the decision would test the Philippines' relationship with the United States, Magsaysay said she did not think so because Philippine courts had convicted scores of US citizens of crimes in the past.

She added that she was pleased with the decision because Nicole got what she had long wanted.

VFA and Balikatan

And should the US government refuse to comply with the high court's ruling, this could be ground for the Philippine government to revoke the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), Bluemindoro Rep. Pedro Bucayu said.

"Now the Americans will be misled whether they respect the supremacy of the Supreme Court and agree to place Smith under Philippine custody. That's failure to do so would be a reason for the Philippines to suspend or even terminate the VFA," Bucayu said.

But militant lawmakers had a different take on the ruling, which also upheld the constitutionality of the VFA.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said a bigger issue than Smith's custody was the Balikatan exercises being conducted under the agreement.

Casiño said the joint exercises, which are held in various provinces, amount to de facto combat operations.

He said Bayan Muna was considering filing another case at the high court to question the seeming permanent presence of US troops in the country.

Affront

Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza said the high court's decision was an "affront to [Philippine] sovereignty."

"With this decision, the court has virtually given the United States a free hand in dealing with criminal offenders from the US military and denies the hopes of attaining justice for summary and obdurate victims of abuse and violence," Maza said in a statement.

She said US troops had no business to arrest they had visited, thus increasing fears of human rights abuse in provinces where the Balikatan would be held.

"We can expect more impunity now that the Supreme Court has rendered our courts limp and toothless in the face of US criminal violations," Maza said.

With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

SC: US Marine should be kept in RP prison; VFA constitutional

From page A1

Philippine jurisdiction.

He said the negotiators would determine the appropriate facility for Smith.

Talks started

"When there are negotiations, we have to find out whether they'll be considerable," Enrile told reporters. "But remember, this is a legal matter. I'm only reading from the Supreme Court decision, so let's await the response from the other side, from the American authorities."

In a statement, the US Embassy said it had "taken note" of the high court's ruling.

"As it concerns important legal issues, we have referred it to the US government's legal experts in Washington," the embassy said.

But Senator Undersecretary Marina Corpus said that based on a conversation with the US Embassy's political officer after news of the decision broke, Philippine and American officials had started the talks.

Within 24 hours

Reached for comment on the phone, Nicole's lawyer Evalyn Ursua said Philippine and American authorities should agree within 24 hours on the facility that should hold the rape convict.

"They should have an agreement within 24 hours ... And we believe that it should be [the national penitentiary] in Muntinlupa because we can accommodate [Smith] there ... They might suddenly say he'll be held in a private residence," Ursua said in a text message.

She said Smith must be treated "like any Filipino worker."

"Them should be on special treatment, and [the facility] should be accessible to the public so he can be easily checked," the lawyer said.

The Supreme Court spokesperson Midas Marquez pointed out that the decision had yet to be executory.

"They [Smith's lawyers] can still file a motion for reconsideration," Marquez said.

Accuse is powerful

Former Senators Jovito Salonga and Wigberto Tañada had filed a petition questioning the US Embassy taking custody of Smith pending his appeal, and at the same time asking that the VFA be declared unconstitutional.

The high court's en banc decision written by Justice Adolfo Azcuna—who is to retire on Feb. 15—states: "The [VFA] between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States ... is upheld as constitutional but the Romulo-Kenney Agreements of Dec. 19 and 22, 2006, are declared not in accordance with the VFA."

The decision adverted to Article 5, Section 10 of the VFA that says: "The confinement or detention by Philippine authorities of United States personnel shall be carried out in facilities agreed on by appropriate Philippine and United States authorities."

Chief Justice dissents on VFA

Chief Justice Reynato Puno and Justice Antonio Carpio led those who believe the VFA is unconstitutional. Their separate dissenting opinions were concurred in by Justices Rita Aquino Santiago Martinez and Conchita Carpio Morales.

Puno and Carpio said the VFA should also be ratified as a treaty by the US Senate for it to be ratified in the Philippines.

The four dissenters also wanted Smith to be immediately transferred to the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa while waiting for the resolution of his appeal.

But the court en banc said: "The VFA, which is the instrument agreed upon to provide for the joint RP-US military exercises, is simply an implementing agreement in the main RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty."

It said the issue was whether the Commission allowed the presence of US armed forces in Philippine territory under a treaty duly concurred in by the Senate and recognized as a treaty by the other contracting state.

Regular checks

Smith is staying in room 116 of the Embassy compound on Roxas Boulevard under the watch of American soldiers and checked by Embassy security. Corpus from time to time.

Ursua said the foreign affairs, justice and interior departments "should act with dispatch."

She said Smith should be moved immediately as "we don't know how the US will react."

"This time there's no more confusion about it: the Supreme Court is saying [Smith] should be under Philippine authority," Ursua said, citing unconfirmed information she received 1 week ago that the rape convict was no longer in the embassy compound.

According to Corpus, Smith was in the US compound the last time he checked on Feb. 5.

"He lost a little weight, maybe because he got to exercise, which is OK for his health," Corpus said.

'Uphill climb'

Corpus said he had been looking in on Smith monthly since the latter was moved from Jan. 6, 2006, except for holiday months when he was "preoccupied" with other concerns.

Asked what role the Department of Interior and Local Government would play in the negotiations, Corpus said: "We are just the implementers, so we will have to wait for the result of the negotiations."

She said Smith would be moved to a 46-foot cargo container that would serve as his temporary detention cell. (The holding where his cell was located was up for demolition.)

On Feb. 3, 2006, the Supreme Court in a resolution ordered the Solicitor General and three petitioners—Nicole, former Senate President Jovito Salonga and the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan party—to file their comments on whether the VFA was "unconstitutional" in the United States.

The petitioners had been questioning the constitutionality of the VFA provision that grants the US government custody of its personnel convicted of a crime but seeking an appeal in Philippine courts. **Inquirer Research**

WHAT WENT BEFORE

On Dec. 4, 2006, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith was convicted of raping "Nicole," a Filipino woman, at the Subic Bay freeport on Nov. 1, 2005.

Judge Benjamin Pozon sentenced the US Marine to reclusion perpetua, or a maximum of 40 years in prison. His three codefendant, also American Marines, were acquitted.

Smith was initially held at the Makati City Jail. A day after his conviction, the lawyers filed an appeal stating that per Article 5, Paragraph 5 of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), he should remain in the custody of US military authorities at the US Embassy until the end of all judicial proceedings, including the appeal.

The US Embassy and the Philippine foreign affairs and justice departments concurred with Smith's position.

But Pozon dismissed Smith's appeal on Dec. 13, saying US custody of the latter was "for remand after the completion of the trial and rendition of the judgment of conviction."

Pozon also said Smith should stay at the Makati jail "until the appropriate Philippine and US authorities shall have come to a binding agreement as to the proper facilities where [the] should carry out his confinement or detention during his appeal and until further orders from this court."

On Dec. 15, Smith's lawyers raised the custody issue to the Court of Appeals.

On Dec. 22, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney signed an agreement on Smith's detention in the US Embassy compound.

On Dec. 29, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) handed over Smith to the US Embassy. Conducted surreptitiously at midnight, the transfer sparked outrage among various groups.

On Jan. 2, 2007, the appellate court ruled on Smith's petition for a temporary restraining order vs. his confinement at Makati jail, granting the power of the Philippine government over visiting US troops.

But the court said it could not do much in the custody dispute because the agreement that resulted in Smith's transfer to US custody had rendered the matter "moot."

On July 1, 2008, the DILG announced in a statement Smith's transfer to a 46-foot cargo container that would serve as his temporary detention cell. (The building where his cell was located was up for demolition.)

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Obama unveils $2-trillion bank rescue plan

From page A1

Negotiators hoped to seal agreement on the economic stimulus package on Wednesday after making good progress in the first rounds of closed-door talks.

But by Tuesday, the images appeared to $838-billion economic stimulus bill, but with only three moderate Republicans signing on and then demanding the bill's size be slashed when they final version emerges from negotiations.

Negotiators were working with a target of about $800 billion for the final bill, lawmakers said.

Stocks tumble

Lack of detail about the bailout program announced by Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and questions about whether the private sector could be enticed to sign on sent major US stock indexes tumbling. Banking and financial stocks were particularly hard hit.

The three industrials on Tuesday fell 4.62 percent. Broader stock indicators also tumbled, with the Standard & Poor's 500 index down 4.91 percent—the biggest drop for the index since the Obama inauguration on Jan. 20.

Bank markets in Asia and Europe were mostly lower on Wednesday following the steep sell-off on Wall Street, as investors reacted with skepticism to the US government's latest plan to rescue the ailing financial industry with as much as $2 trillion in funding.

"It's fair to say that the latest version of the bailout plan in the US was greeted with some disappointment, simply because there was a complete lack of detail which was what investors were hoping for," said Richard Hunter, head of UK equities at Hargreaves Lansdown stockbrokers at London.

"Certainly in drawing a line into and for all over loan assets, the markets will be waiting for further detail from the US authorities," he added.

Wall Street 'relaxation'

Obama said Wall Street was mistakenly looking for an "easy out" in the bailout plan, telling ABC television it was time for banks and the financial system to come clean about the scope of their loses.

Geithner explained his complex banking rescue plan shortly before the Senate voted to give the administration $355 billion in spending and tax cuts as part of the broader US economic effo

IT'S THE ECONOMY, MR. PRESIDENT President Obama holds a news briefing in Fort Myers, Florida, to discuss the worsening economy and his rescue plan to make it going great guns again. On this, Obama has a sure-fire presidency.

The Senate measure will have to be reconciled with a slightly smaller measure passed by the House of Representatives late last month. Obama wants that done quickly so he can sign the bill by early next week.

Part of the Senate package restricted executive pay that would receive spending or US production and used for stimulus projects.

Geithner revealed the massive financial rescue effort only moments before Obama told an audience in Fort Myers, Florida, that "the economy we face could not be more serious."

The trip is among the hardest hit by the double hit of home mortgage foreclosures sweeping the nation.

Storm warning

The president, moving into his fourth crisis-laden week in office, had used his first White House news conference on Monday night to warn Congress that a risked turning "a crisis into a catastrophe" had it failed to approve the stimulus package.

While the plan made it through both chambers of the legislature, it drew only three Republican votes in the Senate and none in the House, a major slap at Obama's vows to take the partisan heat out of the US political process.

Geithner sternly warned the nation that it was facing a tough year and said the only way to get the economy back on its way was to see unprecedented amounts of government funds.

"This strategy will cost money, it will involve risk and it will take time," Geithner said in announcing the plan.

The package would attack the financial collapse on three fronts: Working to restart the flow of credit, removing bad debt from the books of troubled banks and providing assistance for ordinary Americans and small businesses.

The financial plan gives out of a $700-billion rescue program put in place in October, under the Bush administration, as the depth of the country's financial sector troubles surfaced with a collapse of the housing market.

Administration's 3 objectives

"Right now external parts of our financial system are damaged," Geithner said in unveiling the new plan. "Instead of catalyzing recovery, the financial system is working against recovery and that's the dangerous downside we need to change."

In moving on the three tracks, Geithner said the administration intended to:

- Ensure that banks' balance sheets are "cleaner and stronger."
- Establish a fund that combines the resources of the US Federal Reserve, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the private sector that could reach $1 trillion to stimulate spending, particularly in real estate that is "the heart of the crisis." He said the initial target total for the fund was $500 billion.
- Set aside $100 billion from the bailout fund to support an additional $1 trillion in lending under a Federal Reserve program that was announced last November but has yet to begin operations. Half of the $700-billion bailout money was allocated by former President George W. Bush's administration, but that spending has come under heavy criticism for a lack of transparency and the failure of banks to put the money into the desired credit markets.

Obama defended the massive government spending during his press conference Monday night, saying the federal government "is the only entity left with the resources to jolt our economy back to life." AP

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

John Jon Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmirano

Without trains, trolleys rule Bicol tracks

By Jonas Cabiles Soltes
Milaor, Camarines Sur

THE TRAIN DOES NOT stop in Camarines Sur's sleepy suburban town of Milaor. It never did, as the town does not have a train station and the nearest place where one could take the ride is in neighboring Naga City three kilometers away.

It also hardly mattered to the residents when the Philippine National Railways (PNR) halted train operations in 2006 as the state-owned firm could rehabilitate portions of the 478-kilometer railway that were damaged by Typhoons "Milenyo" and "Reming."

In fact, the absence of passenger and freight trains, which used to pass by at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., has even boosted Milaor's economy. Owners of stores and eateries along the railways said more customers were appearing because the train tracks or wooden rail ways now being used as pathways. They also no longer fear that a train might unexpectedly derail.

The tracks have not really been empty and useless since the trains disappeared, thanks to motorized trolleys that have proliferated, especially in towns that do not have good access roads, and have run from morning to sundown.

In Milaor alone, more than 80 trolleys serve as the primary mode of transportation to people living along the "vike" that runs across sprawling rice fields.

They drone "sak-sak-sakasak-sakasak" as its bearings touch the concrete crossbeams of the railways. The sound could be easily drowned by trains that used to ply the tracks.

Illegal transport

Eduardo Bermoso, PNR assistant general manager for operations and maintenance, says trolleys had long been illegal.

But then again, the contraptions are "the least illegal," the operators claim. Trolleys have long been plying the railway in Milaor, they say, but authorities do not mind.

"From the time the trains did not come, I and other trolley operators have earned extra by transporting heavy goods, such as sacks of palay," says Alberto Cayetano, 33. He has been operating a trolley since he was 16 years old.

The trolley men could not freely ply their routes before, for a train would suddenly come their way.

Trolleys do not have costly because roofing materials add weight. Thus, passengers travel in open air and are charged P5 each, the same rate as a piece of baggage.

Equipped with a gasoline-fed motorized engine in front, the trolley can accommodate up to eight passengers seated on metal benches.

Operators also keep their trolleys as light as possible so these can be easily lifted off the railway whenever trains or other trolleys approach. Whenever trolleys do meet, the one with less load must give way.

While before, there were railway cabinets, now the trolley operators mend the railway, removing clumps of rogues grass in some parts.

Income

"I know that operating a trolley is illegal and that we, trolley operators, are using a route which should not be ours," says Antonio Mendoza, 38. "But I am only doing it to provide for my family while looking for a better-paying work to sustain the need of my children."

Operators earn about P200 a day while those paying the P50 "boundary" to trolley owners earn about P150.

"Incidental" expenses include cases of bearings and pulleys which are essential for a trolley to function. Bearings, which work as wheels, cost about P230. These are frequently replaced as they last to just a few days of use.

Since the trolleys are motorized, the informal sector is affected by increases in the pump price of gasoline. "When the price of gasoline increased last year, we decided to increase the fare from P5 to P6 but passengers did not abide, and we could do nothing," Cayetano says.

Before, operators had to use "foot power" to push the contraption on the railway.

"Foot-powered trolleys are impractical. Trolleys now have to be motorized because the wooden crossties had been replaced with concrete crossbeams, which are very abrasive to the feet," Mendoza says.

An operator also has to maintain the frame of the trolley, which is made of lumber, fencing and fabricated metal bar—making it both light and sturdy.

> Trolleys are now motorized. Before, operators used 'foot power' to move the contraptions on the railway

Village transport

From its terminal in Barangay Concepcion Pequeña in Naga, the trolley routes a five-kilometer route that winds through the mostly agricultural villages of Cararayan, Magarao, Milaor, Canaman, and Bombon in Milaor. The conversation can be enabled only through the roads.

There are good access roads from the rice fields in the Milaor town proper or Naga to villagers, including students, prefer trolley rides over motorcycle taxis or other vehicles approach. Whenever trolleys do meet, the one with less load must give way.

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Trolley rides are dangerous, Mendoza admitted. He recalled the day when a careless riding on a trolley slipped and fell right on the railway. Fortunately, the student landed on a spot where the crossties between the crossbeams and the flooring was high enough for the trolley to pass without causing more injury.

Because trolleys are illegal modes of transportation, passengers cannot claim for damages in case of accidents.

Railway repair

Bermoso said the two-phase repair and rehabilitation of the railway linking Bicol to Metro Manila would be completed in September. Train rides will resume as soon as the project is finished.

"No one allows trolleys in the railways by then since the tracks are ready again, it will be exclusive to trains," he said.

"This (trolley operation) will have to stop," said Bermoso. "It has started many accidents; we allow it now as the people will not have a hard time traveling from town to town."

EXIT TRACK Passengers defy the risks of riding a trolley in Milaor, Camarines Sur. ALAN BENTAZAR/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

PNR: Trains back in September

By Annelle S. Tayao

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Railways (PNR) has officially began rehabilitation of the 478-kilometer railway line from Laguna to Albay under Phase I of the Southrail Project.

Repair work began on Dec. 22, 2008, especially in railway portions damaged by Typhoons "Milenyo" and "Reming" over two years ago from Barangay San Cristobal in Calamba City to Legaspi to Legazpi City in Albay.

"The mortality (of the tracks) is already at 75,000 pieces, with the concession to Al. ling most affected," Filipinas Bermoso, PNR assistant general manager for operations and maintenance, said in a phone interview.

Bermoso said the improvements would include laying concrete (in to replace wooden ones. Bridge ties will also be replaced, he added.

"Repairs are already ongoing in the Calamba area, as well as the building for (the rehabilitation) of (ten) bridges in Bicol," Bermoso. Procurement of materials for Camarines Sur has started."

Tourist, economy trains

Five coaches and two locomotives are currently garaged in Naga City in Camarines Sur and will be refurbished with new seats and parts, Bermoso said. The trains will also be repainted.

Travel time for the trains will reach up to 70 kilometers per hour. "Eventually, we will have tourist and economy trains," Bermoso said. The PNR will provide the train operators.

A total of P1.5 billion has been allotted by the government for the Southrail project, but so far less than P3 million had been spent. "The funds haven't all been released yet," Bermoso said.

The project is funded entirely by the government, with no loans, he added.

Stations

The railway line will have stations at Lucena City and Hondagua in Quezon, and in Naga City in Camarines Sur and Legazpi in Albay. It will pass through Los Baños (now) and Sto. Pablo City in Laguna, Candelaria, Santaya Aglipayan, Harold, Gumaca, Lopez, Sariaya, Alabang and Tagkawayan in Quezon, Del Gallego and Ragay in Camarines Norte, Baraga Green, Sipocot, Libmanan, Pamplona, Pili City Buna and Iriga City in Camarines Sur; and in Polangui, Oas, Ligao, Guinobatan, Travesia, Camalig and Ligao in Albay.

The PNR aims to complete Phase I of the Southrail project by September.

Under Phase II, a new line will be opened connecting Legazpi to Matnog in Sorsogon, and as the Southrail Project, which will connect Calamba in Metro Manila all the way to Caloocan City.

The Batangas Railway Line will have a separate connection to Calamba.

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

WB project scandal stirs small town

MAJAYJAY, LAGUNA—ALLEGATIONS OF IRREGularities in a P22.8 million project mostly funded by the World Bank here have pitted this town's mayor against the vice mayor and members of the local legislative body.

Councilor Ana Cunita said the Sangguniang Bayan, the local legislative council, has been asking for documents on fund releases related to the project, "but they never gave us."

Cunita said members of the council wrote several letters to the municipal accountant and administrator, through Majayjay Mayor Veronica Rodillas, but the only reply they got was "if there will be no help from you, you better just keep quiet."

"There was no corruption. There were only political claims since we are nearing the 2010 elections," said Rodillas.

He said the vice mayor and the municipal council were given feasibility studies on the project, a plan to develop this for eco-tourism in the town, and "if they wanted documents, they should have gone to the engineering department."

He said check releases were prepared well as if "it passed through a counselor's eyes."

"They can investigate this if they want to," the mayor added.

According to Mrs. Mayor Avelina Mercado, the Majayjay Rehabilitation project was approved by the Bise 2001, but Rodillas had never discussed the project openly with them since then.

"I was requesting a copy [of the signed contract] but they never gave one," said Mercado.

The only document they were furnished in December, he said, was the project's accomplishment evaluation as of Oct. 15, 2008.

The document, covering the period from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, 2008, revealed that P17.9 million was already released for 78.5-percent project completion.

The project included the development of the Tarnay falls in Binangan, Gagalot and the building of structures such as a hanging bridge, pavilions, overnight huts, 18 picnic huts and a souvenir shop.

It has a total cost of P22.8 million—45 percent of which would be a World Bank loan, 40 percent World Bank grant, and 7.5 percent equity cash from the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) and the town of Majayjay.

"If you compute this versus how we see [projects] I, Majayjay is cheap," Cunita said.

Another municipal official, who requested anonymity, said the payment for the loan would start in three years from the time the resort operates.

The payment will be P1.65,000 per quarter for 15 years.

"It will be the people and the next generations who will pay the loan," Cunita said, adding that the payment will come from the internal-revenue allotment of Majayjay.

The project, which started on Nov. 5, 2007, has a one-year contract with the Atlantic Erectors Inc.

The target completion date, however, was extended from Sept. 2008 to Dec. 2008, and then to January this year.

"Everything was done (essentially. Boulders were so big, and we could not bring in equipment," said Danny Caballero, project representative of Atlantic Erectors, when asked about the project's delay.

Marivic Cleon, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Gov suspended on graft raps back to launch more projects

By Joey A. Galvez
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE GOVERnor of one of the country's poorest provinces has returned to work to call a meeting for more projects following her suspension by Ombudsman on graft charges that she was cleared her province's funds.

Milagros Tan, governor of Samar, went back to work on Tuesday after her suspension for 90 days lapsed.

In July last year, Tan was ordered suspended by Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo. Nine other officials of the province were ordered suspended with Tan.

Charges against Tan and the five officials had been filed at the antigraft court in Sandiganbayan.

William Fidel, director and legal consultant of the Ombudsman, viewed the suspension on Tan and the other officials on Nov. 11, 2008.

More projects

Melecio Gaya, a staffer of the governor, said Tan would meet with the province's mayors to discuss projects that she would like to implement this year.

Tan, who will turn 51 on July 25, is now serving her third and last term as governor of Samar, a province with a population of about 340,000 but with one of the highest poverty incidence among the country's provinces.

Also to reassume their posts were Tan's co-accused on the graft charges—provincial administrator Rolando Montejo, provincial treasurer Desiderio Casolo, provincial accountant Ramon Yu-Jao, provincial budget officer Wenifredo Tinoso and provincial property custodian officer Numerianus Legaspi.

Tan said the five provincial officials were ordered suspended after charges had been filed against them by the Iraq (ex) Honor Movement, a nongovernment group that serves as antigraft watchdog in the province, for irregularities in the use of P1.6 million of the province's funds for the purchase of "emergency supplies."

Previous funds

The funds of the cash-strapped province were used, the group said, to purchase rice, medicines and stereo sets for victims of Typhoon Kibong, which swept the province on Dec. 4-5, 2001.

But documents showed that the authority to purchase these items were granted to the province for another calamity, not Typhoon Kibong.

The group also said hundreds of units of rice, that were bought using the province's funds, were condemned by Philsucor's Allot Shed, a grocery store in Tacloban City that was not registered as a genuine supplier's farmer.

In a separate interview, Tac Gov. Jesse Robredo said that he was happy to have served as acting governor for three months.

Robredo said during his short time as acting governor that he was able to initiate the upgrading of provincial and district hospitals, which now have medicines and additional hospital facilities.

LOVE DANCE
In Aguipan province, romance is a theme even for senior citizens. Three aged couples execute an old march in a village festival.

GMA to meet with Cotabato execs on peace talks

KIDAPAWAN CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will meet today with religious, civic and civic leaders here on the status of her administration's peace negotiations with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

North Cotabato Gov. Jesus Sacdalan yesterday said the dialogue is in line with Ms Arroyo's "direct consultation" with the people of Mindanao in connection with the possible resumption of talks with the MILF.

"Members of the Presidential Security Group have sanitized the provincial capital premises [for the dialogue]," he said.

Sacdalan said the President will be accompanied by her Cabinet and Ambo. Bayen, presidential assistant on the peace process and former national police chief.

"The President's direct consultation with the people will give her the chance to get the real public sentiments that her government can incorporate [in the negotiations]," said Sacdalan, one of the most vocal opponents of the botched agreement on ancestral domain that would have given the MILF control of more villages in Mindanao.

Andal Pano, unwelcoming representative of various sectors here, the President will also talk with local government officials at a separate meeting in Davao City. Ms Rosario of Public Information Office (PIO) of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said.

On Tuesday, the MILF said the decision to resume peace talks is not to start anymore.

Reacting to an earlier statement by a government official, the rebel group's chief negotiator said the stalled negotiations can only restart once the government makes a clear stand on an MILF demand for more territory.

Sorigao Alfonso Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, who is also chief government negotiator, earlier said he had met with Malaysian Foreign Minister Rais Yatim on the talks and that they were optimistic the rebel group would agree to resume the negotiations.

Seguis said he was told that Malaysia was willing to host the talks again.

Last year, Kuala Lumpur pulled out its contingent to the International Monitoring Team (IMT), the body that oversees the fragile truce between the rebels and the government, due to dismay over the slow progress of the negotiations.

Charlie Lobaco, Jeoffrey Medrano and Rhea Arac, Inquirer Mindanao

Negros solons, mayors to 'bond' in Macau

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—CONGRESSmen and mayors of Negros Occidental belonging to the United Negros Alliance (UNA) have chosen Macau, a gambling haven, for their "bonding" on March 5-6, according to one of the mayors.

Manuel Bacalzo, mayor of Binalbagan town, said the congressmen and mayors will be in Macau to discuss their political plans for next year.

Bacalzo, also president of the Negros Association of Chief Executives, said the local officials would pay for their own trip because it was "very cheap" to travel to Macau, which has laid-off hundreds of workers, including Filipinos, as a result of the global recession.

The cheapest air fare to Macau is P11,000 one-way. Rates of rates there range from about P4,000 to P12,000 per night per room.

He said the local officials also chose Macau because they didn't want to be distracted.

"Macau that is also one way of finding out muscles for the coming 2010 elections," Bacalzo said.

UNA is a coalition of members of Lakas, Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), the Nacionalist People's Coalition and other political parties in Negros Occidental.

It became known for fielding top candidates competing in elections.

Bacalzo, however, said the "bonding" in Macau is not to forge an alliance with Governor Joseph Marañon.

Another municipal official, who requested anonymity, said the payment for the loan would start in three years from the time the resort operates.

The payment will be P1.65,000 per quarter for 15 years.

"It will be the people and the next generations who will pay the loan," Cunita said, adding that the

NEWSBRIEFS

■ SAN JOSE, Batangas

Batangas banks safe

RURAL banks in Batangas remained stable despite the crisis caused by the Legacy Group, which owns rural banks in different parts of the country, an official from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said Monday during a dialogue with the rural bank owners in the province.

Alberto A. Reyes, BSP's Director of Central Point of Contact, said in a Sangguniang Bayan hearing here Monday that the 28 head offices and 68 branches of rural banks in the province remain in stable condition, well capitalized and well managed.

Reyes' announcement came in the wake of a dialogue sought by worried rural banks owners in the province.

The meeting came after text messages circulated claiming that some rural bank branches in Batangas will be closed. **Marah Erika Lasalita, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

■ TACLOBAN CITY

Bigger camp for Army

THE PHILIPPINE Army based in Eastern Visayas will have a new and bigger base in the region by next year.

Maj. Gen. Arthur Tabaquero, commanding general of the 8th infantry division, led groundbreaking ceremonies for a new Army headquarters in Barangay Malajog, Sta. Rita, Samar on Sunday.

The decision to transfer to a new location was practical as the new camp is bigger, according to Col. Ernesto Gonzales Hilo, Magkalong Tooda.

The 8th ID is currently based in Camp Manolong, Calbayog in Samar, a 45-3-hectare area that has been the main headquarters of the Philippine Army in the region since Oct. 17, 1987.

The new location is about 633 hectares, which is more than enough, Tooda said.

The 8th ID is composed of three brigades and eight battalions. It serves the whole of Eastern Visayas and Bohol province in Central Visayas. **Joey A. Galvez, Inquirer Visayas**

■ EVENTS

San Pedro club award

THE SEARCH for the Most Outstanding San Pedrenosian for 2009 is underway as the San Pedro Lions Club, an organization of professionals in San Pedro, Laguna, announced that honors will be given to winners during the group's 60th anniversary celebrations on Feb. 21.

The recognition of outstanding citizens of San Pedro is part of the Search San Pedrenosian Project of the club.

"This is done yearly to honor those who have contributed much to society and gave honor to the town," said Boy Romero, club president and deputy immigration commissioner, in a press release.

Deadline for submission of nominees is on Feb. 16. For inquiries and nomination forms, contact Municipal Administrator Nestor Dibuit at 847-1722 and 529-1964.

Editor Rodolfa S. Malonzo ■ Assistant Editor Francis T. Cichon

SPORTS

PSA Siddayao award goes to rising stars Torres, Ramos

By Ronina S. Asnaro

A TALENTED YOUNG CAGER AND A champion kid golfer will share the limelight with the sporting world's biggest stars during the San Miguel Corporation Philippine Sportswriters (SMC PSA) Annual Awards Night on Feb. 20 at the Manila Peninsula Hotel.

Filipino-American cager Norbert Torres, 19, and junior golfer Jill Ramos, 11, are the recipients of the Tony Siddayao Awards, given to young and promising athletes who excelled in their respective disciplines.

Siddayao is the late former Manila Standard sports editor. Awards are the focus of Philippine sports every evening.

The 6-foot-7 Torres, who hails from Bulacan but is now based in Canada, spearheaded the Nokia BC Youth 16-under team that swept the Southeast Asia Basketball Association (Seaba) junior men's championship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May.

The win gave the country a slot in the 18th Asian junior men's championships in Tehran won by the host country 89-78 over Lebanon for second place.

Ramos, former #1 Bakwitan, climbed the local Class C (11-12 years) crown at the expense of competitor Angela Gonzalez in the 2008 Asia-Pacific Junior Golf in Sherwood Hills in Tiwi Marines, Cavite, also last May.

Pair winners of the Siddayao award include Wesley So, Jenny Ardina, Mia Legaspi, Cyan Rodriguez, Marvel Payot and the SF junior rookie team.

Five-time Athlete of the Year awardee Manny Dequina heads the honorees in the yearly awards rite sponsored by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

Asistio, S'porean share lead

By Hazeng B. Cueto

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—TYSELITE Asistio, who fell just short of winning last year, fired a one-under-par 71 yesterday to take a piece of the WWW/DHL National Amateur championship lead with a crack Singaporean yesterday at the Canlubang Golf Course here.

The 19-year-old Asistio actually operated with bogeys on Nos. 11 and 16 before closing out with three birdies on the front nine for a one-over 143, the same output by Jerome Ng, who matched par.

"I just need to keep hitting greens and give myself birdie chances," Asistio, who fired an opening 74, said.

Amateur champion Bettie James dropped into a share of third at 146 with 38 bogeyless after firing a 75 marked by a double bogey 6 on the 18th.

Singapore, who is semi-retired but finished second to Asistio in the ISP Amateur last year, had a second straight 72.

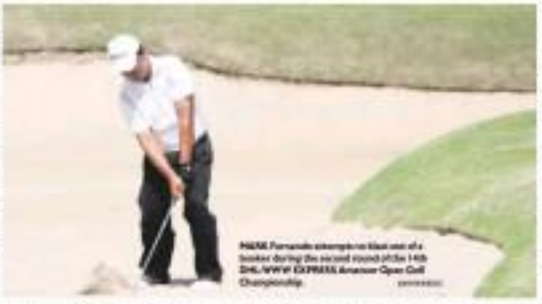
Another Singaporean, the former Quincy Quek, was also in Asistio's group after matching par.

Host-country leader Hiram Peñaranda struggled on his way to posting an 80, signing for 10 total bogeys against four birdies and found himself two shots from being two up at the start of the day.

"Though I scrambled well, I couldn't hit the fairways for par," said the 20-year-old Peñaranda.

Celine Ilarde, the 2008 RP Ladies champion, opened a three-stroke lead at the start of the 54-hole women's championship by firing a 73.

Regine de Guzman held second place, a stroke ahead of Hannah Lee Jung-Pak who carded a 77.



HANA Fernando attempts to blast out of a bunker during the second round of the 14th DHL/WWF EXPRESS Amateur Open Golf Championship.

Crucial bouts for UFC bets Vera, Muñoz

By Jake Mararo

TWO FOREIGN-BASED FIGHTERS WITH Filipino roots are aiming in the Ultimate Fighting Championship '96 on March 8 at the Toyota Arena in Columbus, Ohio.

Brandon "The Truth" Vera takes on homegrown lad Michael Bisping while Mark Muñoz makes his debut against Matt "The Hammer" Lindland in the light heavyweight division.

The 28-year-old Vera tries to regain momentum after dropping three of his four previous fights.

After entering his UFC career with eight straight victories, Vera won his an MMA record of 9-3 that dropped him way back in the light heavyweight division.

In contrast, Muñoz had shown promise after chalking up five wins in the World Extreme Cagefighting (WEC), a lower-known tournament affiliated with the UFC.

Muñoz wowed UFC honcho when the former All-American wrestler from Oklahoma State floored Chuck Grigsby and Ricardo Arona.

Known in the WEC as "the Filipino Wrestling Machine," the 31-year-old Muñoz faces a tough foe in the veteran Lindall, a one-time world ranked lightest middleweight. Vera "Riptide" Andy to the UFC 92 last year.

Bumili lang sa authorized Petron Gasul dealers.

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Batang Pier: Winning starts from within

By Jaymee M. Payo

IN GOING AFTER GREATNESS, RAMBOCK Centro knows exactly where to start.

More than just assembling a talented crew, the Batang Pier believe that their success in grabbing six straight PBL championships comes from believing they can win in the first place.

"In all the years that we've been here in the PBL, I think we showed a different kind of passion for the game. Even the worst-record players in the ball boy" said Harbour Centro team owner Wilkee Romero. "Our refusal to lose, I think that's the legacy we're leaving."

Harbour Centro officially retired its team-career last Tuesday after posting many the Magnolia Hotsweaters Wizards in four games of their best-of-three OG Flex Landscaping Cup title series.

The move was in recognition of the historic feat the Batang Pier of Kelah accomplished before taking the court at the Ynares Center Rizal in the Philippine Basketball Association.

"We thought that only elite teams can do a grand slam, but we surprised that," said Romero. "When we were going for our fourth title, we already thought it might be impossible. So winning six straight was really special."

Capturing the sixth crown also meant more for the Batang Pier who rallied for an 89-72 triumph over the Wizards in Game 4 despite the absence of top scorer Reed Juntilla.

"It's probably one of the emotional championships that we had," said Romero. "The battle was on and off the court, so it was a sweet victory for us."

Juntilla, who was suspended by his former pro team, was previously cleared by PBA commissioner Sonny Barrios just hours before the game. He ended up skipping the crucial match to abide by the pro league's guidelines on free agents.

The sixth crown put the Batang Pier in a tie for second with Welcoat/Iron or Shine for the most number of titles, one behind record holder Sta./Tanduay.

"We'll still be around," said Romero, who announced that his franchise will change its name to B2 Builders. "The team will be revamped because most of us will be focused on Burger King. But we'll be competitive."

ACHIEVO

Audit PFF finances, Martinez dared

By Cedelf P. Tupas

A MEMBER OF THE PHILIPPINE Football Federation board of governors yesterday dared PFF president Jose Mari Martinez to prove that funds intended for 16 local football coaches under the program of the Asian Football Confederation were not misappropriated or subverted.

PFF board governor Boying Remetio, also a lawyer member of the PFF technical committee, yesterday revealed that only $3,000 (roughly P150,000) of the total program cost of $25,000 (about P1.175 million) given to the football agency by the AFC from July to December last year were paid by the PFF.

"Dr. (Martinez) has to establish that there were no misappropriations of funds," Remetio, president of the Iloilo FA, told the Inquirer by phone.

Martinez defended his decision not to release the funds in full, saying the coaches failed to submit their monthly reports.

Pagcor, PSC host sports lunch date

By Marc Anthony Reyes

UNITED FOR THE LOVE OF PHILIPpine sports.

The Philippine Sports Commission is hoping to get this message across during a get-together at lunch today with officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee and the nation's sports associations.

PSC chair Harry Angping said the affair will be hosted by Ellenne Gonzales, head of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, a major benefactor of Philippine sports, in Pagcor's headquarters in Ermita.

Angping said officials have been requested to wear red and their name tags will be heart-shaped in keeping with the month's theme of love and unity among sports leaders who were divided because of the recent POC elections.

Spokesperson Joey Romasanta said the local Olympic body will be represented while POC deputy secretary general and squash president Mark Joseph said all NSAs will be present.

"The meeting comes in the wake of a recent Angping criticism of the POC for being "too optimistic" in predicting the country's chances in the Southeast Asian Games in Laos this December.

Angping also blamed the NSAs for their unfinished cash advances and demand them of being too cozy resulting in failing to meet deadlines and failing to show their approximate after getting them.

Talk 'N Text wraps it up

Alaska chokes, flubs four free throws in the clutch

By Marang P. Castillo

TALK 'N TEXT TIPPED A SERIES TO remember with a Game 7 performance for the ages, rapping Alaska, 93-89, last night, to clinch the 2008-09PBA Philippine Cup before close to a crowd of 17,000 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Mac Cardona scored 21 points and Asi Taulava came off the bench to enter 19 as the Tropang Texters completed a comeback from 0-2 down in the series as one and nailed a second all-Filipino title.

The lone pro-up significant fight by rallying from as many as 13 points down in the third period to pass the way for an ecstatic ending.

But Alaska lost its firepower in the stretch and illustrated its collapse by missing four straight free throws in the dying seconds with Talk 'N Text leading by two.

Cardona scored 18 of his total in the middle two quarters. He finished with two steals, two assists and a block and was named the PBA Press Corps' Mighty Bond Finals MVP.

Jaypee Belencion scored 13 points in the fourth period and almost single-handedly rallied the Aces, who were ranged ahead, 80-67, after two Larry Stanzione free throws off Harvey Carey with 2:30 left.

It was Carey who gave the lead back to the Texters with a jumper, 91-89, with 1:29 left and the Aces fired blanks from there. Then five throws by Arizona skipper with three seconds left completed the scoring.

Miller went on to lead the Aces with 21 markers, but missed free throws after Joe Devereux blew his own thunder earlier.

Though it was not a loss either bit until the final two games were by the Texters, the series will be remembered for how close it was fought and for how well the players played and poured their hearts out each night.

For new Talk 'N Text coach Chot Reyes, it was his third all-Filipino with a third team after also guiding Coca-Cola and Purefoods to conquests in the more prestigious tournament staged by the league early year.

Cardona, without the taunting and the trash-talking, was at his excellent self in the third period, and valet James Castro providing a lot of firepower support, the Texters led by as many as 11 there.

PLAYERS, team officials and supporters of the Talk 'N Text Tropang Texters celebrate one after the tonight ceremony.

Dream vs reality on the road to Laos

IT'S EASY TO SUSPECT THAT THE Philippine expedition to this year's Southeast Asian Games is being led by unscrupulous of outstanding style and presentation.

How do we, for example, reconcile the sense of a wild dreamer to that of a risky realist?

To fairness to the president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, recent shows he was the overall chair of the organizing committee when 00 topped the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

But to accuse critics of having a short memory, but athletics chief Go Teng Kok, running for re-election as Olympic Congress, said the POC president deserves all the support he needs for this year's Laos Games.

* * *

A modest special assistant to the POC head, he said they would no longer be wary of sufficient funding under the new leadership in the Philippine Sports Commission.

"All we want is equal treatment of national sports associations and unity to gain a report of the 2009 overall championship," he said.

That, you bet, is a valid call.

But would sufficient funds be a remedy for PH success in this year's Southeast Asian Games?

Is unity possible in the national sports hierarchy run by grizzled politicians?

* * *

So, the newly installed chair of the Philippine Sports Commission did not actually recall Congressional documents.

Cojuangco has boldly set a target of 100 to 120 gold medals in the Laos Games.

But, obviously smarting from two successive debacles—the anomalous sixth place finish in the 2007 SEA Games and the embarrassing 11th place finish in the 2007 Asian Games—Cojuangco has since been more circumspect.

"There'll be no room for blind promises and reckless ventures.

At least, Cojuangco no longer had to be reminded to set his house in order.

In fact, the POC chief has put his foot down and started tackling the leadership squabbles besetting several NSAs.

* * *

In last Monday's hearing by a POC tuneup committee headed by IOC representative Frank Rhodes, former national cyclist Rolando Hao was overheard as saying he did not care which of the contending groups in cycling would be sanctioned.

"What we need here is change. I'm here to fight for what's right and help 00 sports, not to promote any political purpose," Hao told the mediation committee.

Meanwhile, Angping said that, going by the available records, a target of 70 gold medals in the Laos Games should be realistic for the 05 contingent.

There's no second guess whether or not Cojuangco is surrendering his hundred-gold projection.

At least, the 30-gold difference—between Cojuangco's 100 and Angping's 70—is not dizzying as a gap between dream and reality.

* * *

(POINTERS: Iran, veteran strike fielder Alwen "Canada Tan Cruz's running in bodily hurts the feeble-talking Machha Cardona is a great threat which, under the line, is a talent. In fact, Machha must be praised for always giving his all in every game." ... Pasay Cultural Budgeteer Pete Cantoneros: "The Le Jose Pasay Majesty in Cabbrerogues, Sec Nicolas was inaugurated on Feb. 10 with basketball great Otto Lozenga, officials of San Miguel Perth and star-staff of PCAP Pangasinan as special guests. The outlet will support the bar-growing demand for hog feeds at the bases-inclusive cost to their stores.")

BARE EYE

Ritzel Trinidad

UST golf tilt stakes US trips

A ROUND-TRIP TICKET TO LOS ANGELES OR SAN FRANCISCO, and two round-trips tickets to Hong Kong will be among the raffle prizes during the University of Santo Tomas Arts and Letters Alumni Association (USTAALA) golf invitational on Feb. 19 at the Sun Valley in Cogeo, Antipolo City. EVA air will sponsor the Evergreen On Love Class airline ticket to any US West Coast destination during the golf tournament celebrating the faculty's 40th foundation year. UST AE batch '84, the year's active jubilarians will host the golf event and invite it to open to all golf enthusiasts, AE alumni and guests. For inquiries, call 897-9-RESERVE, 8822-8221444, 8921-4435906 and 8915-2505804 or e-mail ctonnosuy@yahoo.com.

Religon 5-cocker resumes

THE 5TH ECUMENICAL COCKFIGHT HOLDS THE SECOND ROUND OF ITS THREE-DAYS of its 888C 10th Anniversary. It took derby at 4 p.m. today, in a big show of support, all 40 members of the new Religon Cockers Association fielded entries on Tuesday. Qualifiers will advance to the championship on Feb. 11. For details, call 09 1227s and 09288912.

Ugba derby at Pasig Square

A TOTAL OF EIGHTEEN GAME ENTRIES TODAY IN THE 2ND ED BARBOCK Breeders Association (UGBA) Open-it-cock derby at Pasig Square Garden. Eliminations rounds will be staged today and on July 17 and the final on Feb. 19. The winners stand to receive a guaranteed prize of P2 million for an entry fee of P6,888. For details, call 0917-5771826 or 0905-5859440.

Ang tropang palaban,
walang 'di kayang
lampasan!

Congratulations!

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TROPANG TEXTERS

THE KFC-PBA PHILIPPINE CUP CHAMPIONS

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Gumagaan ang life namin sa panalo niyo.

Aplus METRO
Editor Ricardo S. Chanday

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Pwede ring ipang-emergency
Pwede ring ipang-kahit ano
Pwede ring ipang-kahit saan
Pwede ring ipang-kahit kailan
Pwede ring ipang-kahit sino
Pwede ring ipang-kahit alin
Pwede ring ipang-kahit gaano
Pwede ring ipang-kahit kanino
Pwede ring ipang-kahit paano

Cops search QC building for thieves after receiving tenant's call for help

By Nancy Carvajal

POLICEMEN YESTERDAY SEARCHED TO a five-story residential and commercial building at the corner of Araneta Avenue in Cubao, Quezon City, after receiving a call from a tenant who reported that five men carrying high-powered firearms had barged into the building.

However, members of the Quezon City Police District's Special Weapons and Tactics team who searched every room at the Amyrel Mansion went away empty-handed.

"We searched the whole building and did see that one armed man," Cubao police chief Supt. Edgardo Tamayo told reporters.

The building caretaker, Teresita Maldelan, later told the police that a man barged into his unit and at gunpoint, took his wallet.

"A man broke into the unit I was occupying and told me that he would shoot me if I did not follow his instructions," he said.

Except for his wallet, the robber did not take anything else, he added.

The suddenly, according to a barangay official in the area, was the latest in a series of thefts which were reported inside the building.

"My advise remains to be more alert and to try to leave their unit door only when there had been reports of robbery incidents in the past where the victims told the suspects were also residents in the building," Barangay Kaunlaran chair Teresa Asuncion told the reporters.

Asuncion, meanwhile, said he would investigate the reported incidents. "I was just assigned here four we will ... help the necessary actions to stop it," he added.

Asuncion said that only last week, one of the companies in the building lost its payroll money to robbers.

May Pantoja, an employee of EMJ Travel Tours which has an office in the building, told the barangay that last year, they were robbed by two men who took P200,000 in cash, a laptop computer and several cell phones.

She added that she had no idea if the robbers were arrested or not.

According to her, the building has no security officers. Maldelan, the caretaker, sometimes acted as the security guard, she said.

The inquirer went to the office of the building administrator to get a comment but was told that the official was not around.

DID YOU KNOW

THE SIGOS swarm of feathered in the form of Pantoja, now known as Panabajan City, in the 18th century were still walking, fishing, planting and threatening, chopping-making and weaving. Natives also traded with Chinese and Indian merchants.

Cyril L. Bendaña
Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

Muntinlupa starts lake cleanup

THE CITY government of Muntinlupa has started clearing part of Laguna Lake of water lilies which fishermen have been blaming for their declining fish catch. Led by Mayor Aldrin San Pedro, some 100 volunteers from the city's Lake Management Office, public schools, village officials and homeowners associations joined the cleanup of the lake on Monday. Members of the Neighborhood Sanitation ng mga Mukhti na Nagkakaisa sa Muntinlupa also lined up in modernday - which accounted for the bulk of the fish population. "Fishermen have complained that water lilies have encroached on a large portion of the lake, preventing them from fishing," he said in a radio statement. The mayor said the city government may planning to use the collected water lilies to make livelihood opportunities to some residents. Acco-ordinator San Pedro, the dried leaves and stalks of the water plant can be used for making bags, decorative items, slippers and other native products. He said the water lilies can also be utilized to produce charcoal. "The collected water lilies will not go to waste. ... A group of women in Barangay Cupang is burning water lilies into native products such as bags, coasters and baskets," he said.

Marlon Ramos

2 suspected robbers arrested

POLICE arrested two suspected robbers who were reportedly about to rob a passenger jeepney in Pasay City yesterday. SPO4 Rodolfo Esquivel Jr., case investigator, identified the suspects as Pedro Dayta, 30, and Robert Ray, 30, both residents of Apelo Cruz Street, Pasay City. Esquivel said the men had been involved in several robbery incidents in the past. "In fact, they had just been released from prison a few months ago after witnesses in a robbery case they were facing failed to attend the hearings," he added. Despite said the suspects were standing in front of a restaurant on Edsa-Rotonda at around 5:30 p.m. when PO3 Charito Pilares and PO3 Jonathan Montero, who were then also killing the area, arrested them. When accosted, he said the suspects pointed two knives. Esquivel said the suspects fitted the descriptions of locks wandering men responsible for a series of robbery cases in the city since December.

Marlon Ramos

Man killed in Pasig fire

A 36-YEAR-OLD man died in a 20-minute fire that hit his residence in Pasig City before lunch yesterday, officials said. Firefighters discovered the remains of the victim, Ferdinand Ocday, after they put out the blaze that hit the house at 21-A San Mateo St., Barangay Kapitolyo, a report to the Pasig Fire Department said. Arson investigator, FO1 Salvador Montante, said the fire was first reported at 11:22 a.m. and was put out at 11:40 a.m. It was fast, the fourth alarm. He said the origin of the fire remained under investigation.

DJ Yap

DANGEROUS SPOT
A man and a woman sit on a trolley on the railroad tracks in Bicutan City, oversight of the danger they face should a train suddenly pass by.
(INFORMATION)

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

The JBC announces that the following are candidates for the two (2) positions of Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals (vice Hon. Vicente Q. Roxas & Pegalatan E. Bluemberg):

1. ALAWAS, SALMA P.
2. ALMARIÑAS, REYNALDO A.
3. ALVARO, ORLINDA N.
4. ARLES, HENRY S.
5. BALONZO, FREDERICK
6. BARRIOS, RAMUEL M.
7. CASING, AGNES N.
8. CASTILLO, SILVERIO G.
9. CORALES, PEDRO B.
10. CRUZ, RAMON A.
11. DUEÑA, SALVADOR M.
12. DELA CRUZ, EUGENIO G.
13. DIMAANO, LEONORA R.
14. DUMAYAS, NARCISO B.
15. DUMOUN, SHARON JR F.
16. ERUM, MARIA C.
17. FARRALES, JOSEPHA S.
18. FE, FERDINAND A.
19. FRANCISCO, PERPETUO C.
20. FRIVOLA, CARMELITA G.
21. GABRIJAN, SAMUEL N.
22. GENILO, LITA T.
23. GUERRERO, JUANITA T.
24. HERRERA, CECILIA JR. C.
25. HOA, ROLANDO C.
26. INFANTE, AMELIA T.
27. INTING, JOCQUINCITA
28. LAGAP, MERCEDES F.
29. LAGUNZAD, LUCY LYDIA A.
30. MAGPAYAL, AIDA F.
31. MAGDOZA, PABLO B.
32. MINA, PORFIRIO S.
33. MINAWAN, CARMELITA S.
34. MANGUBAT, ARSADEN I.
35. MASIKO, PAMELA MAY A.
36. MUÑEZ, RENATO S.
37. PAGUIDAN, PELAGIO S.
38. PATRIARCA, GEORGE G.
39. PARCESO, VICTORIA ISABEL A.
40. PAULO, IGAN T.
41. PE-AGUIRRE, THELMA T.
42. PERALTA, EDUARDO, JR. B.
43. PERALTA, WILLIAM SIMON P.
44. REGALA, LEAH D.
45. SADIAS, MELCHOR DARRIO C.
46. SALVADOR, PHILIP S.
47. SANTOS, MARIA IRENE J.
48. SILVINGCO, MARIE D.J.
49. SURGA, FRANKLIN C.
50. SORONDON, EDWIN B.
51. VILLANUEVA, RAUL B.
52. VILLANUEVA, ROMULO RE.

The JBC likewise announces that the following are applicants for different judgeship positions:

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC): (REGION IV) BALAYAN, BATANGAS (Br 11): ACCEDERA, Priscilla J.; AUSTRIA, Rose Marie M.; BALOGA, Mariano E.; BELSUA, Amy Aletha S.; CAMPANILLA, Mario S.; CASTILLO, Renato M.; CHUA, Mardi P.; DE GUZMAN, Honofrio S.; DELA PEÑA, Ilumineh N.; OZON, Rodolfo S.; DUMLAO, Florentino, Jr. R.; GALARDO, Pablo, Jr. A.; HIDALGO, Maria Janina J.; LINDOG, Bienvenido D.; LLADOC, Victor P.; MIARAL, Ismael G.; SILVA, Ferdinand S.; PAMINTUAN, Ricardo T.; PASIA, Pio Br.; RAFOLS, Maria Teresa L.; RICABLANCA, Cynthia M.; SILANG, Rolando E.; TENORIO, Buenaventura Albert J.; VILLALUZ, Roland C. LUCENA CITY, QUEZON (Br 58): ARZALA, Angelo R.; AYUMA, Godofredo G.; BAGANDO, Miguel Y.; BALOGO, Expectacion S.; BANDOING, Shan Evangeline B.; CHUA, Elvira C.; DABU, Pedro, Jr. T.; DELA PEÑA, Ilumineto M.; DIZON, Rodolfo B.; ELEAZAR, Victor T.; ESPIRITU, Rio T.; FONTUNG, Jose C.; FRANCISCO, Evangeline M.; JURADO, Alejandro D.; MENDOZA, Ernesto C.; NAVARRO, Ma. Chona P.; PASTRANA, Dennis R.; PEREDNA, Violeta M.; REYES, William N.; RICABLANCA, Cynthia M.; SAMPAGA, Maria Lurbel S.; SANTILLAN, Jose, Jr. G.; VELASCO, Armando C.

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT (MTC): (REGION IV) BACOOR, CAVITE: AGAMA, Marlon R.; AREVALO, Maria Rowena M.; CASIÑO, Mischaela M.; CHUA, Mardi P.; CORTES, Joy Marie C.; DADO, Ma. Victoria C.; FALCIS, Rudiger II G.; FRANCISCO, Evangeline M.; GINGOYON, Adelica M.; MOVELLAN, Philger Noel S.; MAGTURO, Antonina C.; MARAMBA, Mary Jane V.; MAS, Ana Maria T.; MONTEÑA, Ranneta E.; PAGALILAUAN, Shirley M.; PEÑO, Nancy G.

MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC): (REGION I) MAPANDAN-NATIVIDAD-SANTA BARBARA-SUBIC SUR: ARROCENA, Rhodora G.; DOMINGO, Richard T.; HABAB, Christopher R.; LICUDINE, Marina L.; MADONLAN, Homer Jay S.; REPUERTO, Arcel Perla R. STA. CRUZ-STA. LUCIA, ILOCOS SUR: ARROCENA, Rhodora G.; DOMINGO, Richard T.; HABAB, Christopher R.; LACASANDILE, Reynaldo A. MADONLAN, Homer Jay S.; REPUERTO, Arcel Perla R.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants not later than 23 FEBRUARY 2009 (Monday) to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr. Conference Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512; Fax No. 552-9507; e-mail address: jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph or jbc@jbc.judiciary.gov.ph).

All applicants for judicial positions must submit to the JBC ASAP via fax, mail or e-mail their updated JBC Form 1 (Revised September 2007) proof of Filipino citizenship, and 2009 Omnibusloman, NBI and Police Clearances, as well as the other requirements before the date scheduled for their interview. Those who fail to submit the necessary requirements shall neither be interviewed nor considered for nomination.

16 February 2009

MA. LUISA D. VILLAFRANCA
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex Officio Secretary

Is this government a crime syndicate?

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

PETTY RIVALRY AND JEALOUSY among politicians in Iloilo are endangering the lives of the kidnapped members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Vice Gov. Lady Ann Salahuddin, who has been negotiating with the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers, is reportedly being sensured by another politician of being a coddler.

Salahuddin is going out of her way to deal with the kidnappers as a Red Cross official in Sulu.

Why can't Iloilo provincial officials just relax their petty quarrels for the sake of the kidnapping victims?

* * *

What's this Taliban-and-son tandem from the Philippines mentioned in a UN report that was involved in the sale of $100 bills to an African government?

The African government used the fake 'El dollar bills in the election, according to rumors making the rounds in Metro Manila's elite circles.

The father-and-son tandem, also according to rumors, was also involved in the sale of US military hardware to the Abu Sayyaf years ago.

How did the father-son team get hold of the US military items when the older man is a civilian?

And who are these people who, rumors say, have a hold-or-billion dollar deposit in a Europe bank?

Where did they get such a huge amount, if the rumors are true?

* * *

If the rumors are true and the military uncovers the identities of the father and son, hell will break loose.

If the rumors are true, the '25 armaments sold to the Abu Sayyaf are being used against our own soldiers.

In war, people who commit treason are executed.

* * *

Worried friends and relatives have called to ask who were the persons I was alluding to in my column last Saturday who should 'count me silenced.

As I've said, I already told my lawyer and some close friends the identity of these persons.

There's no reason to divulge the source of the report about the threat to my life since the source is my friend and compadre.

Suffice it to say that the concerned persons are well-placed.

I have instructions that if something untoward happens to me, my lawyer and friends should come out with the identities of possible suspects.

If the threat is carried out, this government is a crime syndicate.

* * *

A woman drops the name of a very powerful congressman in facilitating the release of her cargo at the piers, according to some customs brokers.

The cargo contains highly dutiable goods.

Officials at the Bureau of Customs shake in their shoes when the name-dropper goes to the bureau to claim her cargo (read: smuggled goods).

Does the congressman know that his name is being used to rake?

Namedropping is the name of the game in the customs bureau.

* * *

Two big smugglers were having a shopping spell in Canada.

The smugglers also dropped the name of a very influential personality.

The two still go about their nefarious activity, but they're now using other smugglers, unlike before when they were openly doing it themselves.

* * *

A long stretch of the national highway in Bacolod City has not been repaired for eight years and is causing traffic.

Residents say Rep. Monico Puentevella promised to finish the repair of the road, but his promise remains unfulfilled.

Puentevella is very close ally of Mike Arroyo, the President's husband.

TERROR IN KABUL

Suicide bombers, gunmen kill 17

KABUL—TALIBAN FIGHTERS wearing explosive vests, attacked Afghanistan's justice ministry and another government building on Wednesday, killing at least 17 people and wounding 46, officials and a Taliban spokesperson said.

The coordinated attacks—in the heart of Kabul and close to the presidential palace—struck just ahead of a planned visit by Richard Holbrooke, President Barack Obama's special envoy to the region.

The sophisticated assaults in heavily fortified Kabul underscored the task of the Western-backed government battling Islamic militants in the south and east.

Eight members also died in the attacks, bringing the total death toll to 23, said the defense ministry spokesperson, Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi. He said all the attackers had suicide vests, but only three activated or blew themselves up.

Five were armed with assault rifles and grenades attacked the justice ministry in late morning. All were killed in an ensuing gunbattle with security forces, Interior Ministry officials said.

By midday, about two hours after the attacks began, Afghan security forces appeared to be in control of the building. They waved from windows in an apparent all-clear sign, according to a reporter on the scene.

Azimi said at least 17 people were killed between the justice ministry attack and another at a corrections department in northern Kabul.

One of the attackers was shot dead by police outside the education ministry, according to a police officer Dulmey Wasil.

Zabiullah Mujahed, a spokesperson for the Taliban, said five of their fighters attacked the ministry, while two others attacked the corrections department.

Mujahed said the attacks were in response to the alleged unlawful arrest of Taliban prisoners in Afghan government jails.

The Taliban regularly use suicide bombings in their assaults on afghan and foreign troops, but the capital had been largely spared of major attacks recently.

"We have warned the Afghan government to stop arresting our prisoners," Mujahed said in a phone call from an undisclosed location. "Today we attacked the justice ministry compound."

A ministry worker said he scrambled out of a second-floor window to escape an advancing gunman.

"I was in my office on the second floor of the justice ministry when I heard the sound of a strong explosion on the first floor. I came out of my office to see what was going on and I saw a man with an AK-47 shooting at every employee he came to the hall. I saw three employees dead, including one of my colleagues," ministry employee Nasir Mohammad said. AP

POLICEMEN throw out items furniture from the justice ministry building that was attacked by Taliban fighters. REUTERS

Obama eyes sending additional US troops

WASHINGTON—IN THE FIRST significant military move of his presidency, Barack Obama will likely decide in the next few days whether to send more US troops to Afghanistan, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said.

If Obama is going to order more troops to the country within months, as US commanders have requested, he will need to act before a review of policy for Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan is complete, Gates said on Tuesday.

Concerns are growing about the deteriorating security conditions in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"This is the first time that the president has been asked to deploy large numbers of troops overseas, and I assume he has a thoughtful and deliberative approach to that decision is entirely appropriate," Gates told reporters.

"The president will have several options before him," Gates told reporters, referring to the 10-fold effort to stabilize Afghanistan over the past seven years.

"And I think he will make those decisions probably in the course of the next few days," he said. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Malaysia cracks down on newspapers

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian authorities have seized the latest editions of three opposition newspapers, increasing political tensions in the country, officials said on Wednesday. Tempo in have Sinarl since last week when the National Front government took over the coalition-led state from the three-party opposition coalition after several of its lawmakers defected. Cho Sin Yaneh, a senior official with the Home Ministry's publishing unit, said 3,000 copies of the three publications had been confiscated from vendors since Friday because they breached a law forbidding sales at newsstands. The opposition, however, said tens of thousands of copies had been taken. AP

Accusations against Tommy Suharto dropped

JAKARTA—An Indonesian court rejected on Wednesday a civil corruption case against the youngest son of ex-dictator Suharto involving the alleged misuse of $400 million in state funds. The Central Jakarta district court cleared Hutomo Mandala Putra, popularly known as Tommy Suharto, or government allegations that he illegally sold off assets to avoid paying debts to the state. "The panel of judges reject all accusations filed by the plaintiff (the Indonesian government) against all defendants," Judge Soedarto told the court, adding that a counter-suit filed by Tommy was also rejected. AP

China kills fowl after bird flu

BEIJING—China has slaughtered more than 12,000 fowl in the far west of the country after dead birds tested positive for bird flu, state media said. China's Ministry of Agriculture said 3,191 fowl died and were confirmed as having the H5N1 strain of bird flu, the official Xinhua News Agency said late Tuesday. AP

Sussex spaniel wins dog show

NEW YORK—This old dog taught Westminster a new trick. At 10, a Sussex spaniel called Stump became the oldest best in show winner at America's top canine competition, coming out of retirement last week and taking the big prize Tuesday night. "He hasn't slowed down a bit," expert handler Scott Sommer said. "I thought it would be him." A nearly packed house at Madison Square Garden cheered as referee Judge Gail Tatjer pointed to the war champion at the Westminster Kennel Club. AP

Can algae save the world—again?

PLYMOUTH, England—Can algae save the world again? The microscopic green plants cleaned up the earth's atmosphere millions of years ago and scientists hope they can do it now by helping remove greenhouse gases and create new oil reserves. In the distant past, algae helped turn the earth's skies from unbreathable, poisonous into one that could support modern life through photosynthesis, which plants use to turn carbon dioxide and sunlight into sugars and oxygen. Reuters

Mexico unearths mass grave

MEXICO CITY—Archeologists have found a mass grave in Mexico City with two dozen human skeletons laid out in neat lines that could reveal clues about the 16th century Spanish conquest that killed millions. The investigators, a mix of Mexicans, all lying face up with their arms crossed, say they saw that for a palace complex in the Tlaxalteca area, once a major religious and political center for the ancient Aztecs who are now a distrikt in the north of the sprawling Mexican capital. Reuters

No stomach for turmoil? Thank your genes

WASHINGTON—No stomach for the ups and downs of the financial markets? Or maybe you bet everything on the global economic downturn? Genes important for mood and risk-taking likely played a clear role, US researchers reported on Tuesday. They found surprisingly clear-cut links between two genes and the willingness of people to gamble with money. Reuters

Exotic smell key to greasy chip's success

LONDON—Scientists say they may have found not only the good British chip—but the secret behind a complex blend of scents that includes butterscotch, cocoa, cheese and flowers. The aroma has been unpicked by food scientists at Leeds University. Reuters

Twisters kill 8 in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY—An unusual cluster of February twisters touched down across Oklahoma, ripping off roofs, littering roads with downed power lines and killing eight people in a small southern town. Emergency workers searched for victims in the hard-hit 700-person city of Lone Grove, where 6 people died and 11 people sustained serious injuries on Tuesday. Rescuers found one woman injured but still alive under an overturned mobile home before having to suspend search efforts overnight because of power outages. AP

Inconclusive polls put Israel, peace in limbo

JERUSALEM—INCONCLUSIVE election results sent Israel into political limbo on Wednesday with both foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and hardline leader Benjamin Netanyahu claiming victory and leaving the kingmaker role in a rising political bomb with ex-cord-Avigdor Lieberman.

Livni's Kadima Party won 28 seats, just one more than Mr. Netanyahu's Likud, in Tuesday's election for the 120-member parliament, according to nearly complete results. With neither party winning a clear majority, neither can govern alone. Gains by right-wing parties give Netanyahu a better chance of forming a coalition with his natural allies.

"Political Tingle," read the headline on the front page of the daily Yediot Ahronot, alongside photos of the two smiling candidates.

The results set the stage for what could be weeks of coalition negotiations, with Israeli media reporting the first meetings already scheduled for Wednesday.

Whatever a new government is forged, it is unlikely to move quickly toward peace talks with the Palestinians and instead could find itself on a collision course with President Barack Obama, who has cast his's making a Mideast peace deal a priority.

Such paralysis could dampen prospects for Egyptian-led attempts to broker a truce between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers after Israel's devastating offensive in Gaza last month. Hamas might be reluctant to sign a deal at the risk of having it overturned by the incoming coalition.

It's up to Israeli President Shimon Peres to decide whether Livni or Netanyahu should have the first shot at forming a government. Peres will most likely consult with party leaders in hour-long recommendations, and around Feb. 20 experts to assign the task, presidential spokesperson Ayelet Frisch said.

However, the final word may be up to ultranationalist Avigdor Lieberman, a former Netanyahu protege and perhaps Israel's most divisive politician, whose rightist Yisrael Beiteinu gained four seats to the elections to hold 15. AP

Tensions rise over N. Korea missile test

SEOUL—CHINESE FISHING VESSELS have moved out of western waters disputed sea border between the two Koreas, a South Korean military official said on Wednesday, possibly signaling a North Korean short-range missile test is imminent.

In another move that could stoke tensions, US and South Korean news reports said the North had made further preparations to test its longest-range Taepodong-2 missile, with a launch possible as soon as next week.

North Korea usually orders its vessels to stay out of Yellow Sea waters off its west coast when it conducts short-range missile tests. China is the closest thing the North can claim as a major ally and is the impoverished state's biggest benefactor.

"The (Chinese) fishing boats have disappeared, but no other unusual moves have yet been detected," said an official with South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff who asked not to be named.

During its last test launch of short-range missiles in that area in October 2006, the North issued a no-sail order to its ships a few days before firing off missiles, according to South Korean officials. Reuters

Mugabe swears in archenemy as PM

HARARE, ZIMBABWE—ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT Robert Mugabe swears in his longtime rival Morgan Tsvangirai as prime minister on Wednesday, ushering in a unity government in an extraordinary ceremony after nearly three decades of virtually unchallenged rule.

There had been pressure for Mugabe, who remains president in the coalition, to step down altogether and questions remain about the future power-sharing deal's workings.

While Mugabe recently declared "Zimbabwe is mine," he went further on Wednesday than many would have expected. He stood to face Tsvangirai as an equal in a white tent on the grounds of the presidential palace.

Regional leaders watched from the tent and Zimbabweans across the country watched on state TV as Tsvangirai raised his right hand and declared: "I will well and truly serve Zimbabwe in the office of prime minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe, so help me God." AP

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
IMR No. 2009-010 – Goods

SSS Ito's Rice Grant for the 2nd Quarter CY2009

Brief Description of the Project:

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queen

Mass deaths feared in sealed-off town

KINGLAKE, AUSTRALIA—SURVIVING RESIDENTS of Marysville, where up to 100 more people are feared killed in Australia's bush fires, are still being kept out of town to shield them from traumatic scenes there, authorities said on Wednesday.

The rising death toll in Australia's deadliest bush fires now stands at 181, but could exceed 200, according to authorities. If the Marysville deaths are confirmed, the toll may reach 300.

A firefighter who drove through Marysville only 10 minutes before the flames hit on Saturday night said people hanged on the side of his water tanker, begging his team to help people trapped in burning houses.

"The toll is going to be massive," Premier John Brumby said.

Victoria Premier John Brumby said Marysville, which has been off-limits since the weekend fires, would remain so because of the likelihood of ghastly sights in the surrounding town.

"There are still many devastated people in homes," Brumby said, adding between 50 and 100 may be dead in Marysville.

"If people return to their town ... and there are still deceased persons there ... the impact would be quite devastating."

Forensic police sifted through ash and the twisted remains of houses in Marysville, Kinglake and other towns as they tried to identify the hundreds killed.

"We have to go cautiously, street by street, house by house. There are many houses that have collapsed," said Victoria Police Commissioner Christine Nixon, adding it would take weeks to complete the search.

Some of those killed were burnt so badly by fires that reached four stories high they may never be identified.

"In some of these cases, it will be words; before positive identification can be made and, I'm advised by the coroner, it may be virtually impossible to officially identify the bodies," Brumby told reporters.

The fires were through rural areas north of Melbourne on Saturday night, fanned by strong winds and here some temperatures. Melbourne's temperature on Saturday hit 46.4 degrees Celsius, a record for the city.

The disaster area, more than twice the size of London and encompassing more than 20 towns north of Melbourne, has been declared a crime scene. The fires have burnt 1,000 homes and left 5,000 people homeless.

More than 4,000 firefighters are still battling some 53 fires in Victoria state, with 23 of those still out of control.

Two major fires east of Melbourne are threatening to join and if so would pose a major risk to water and gas from the Thompson Imbrook and Longford gas plant, which supply Australia's second largest city. Hundreds of kilometers of control lines were being built to keep the fires apart, fire officials said.

"We continue to be in a fire crisis," Prime Minister Kevin Rudd told parliament.

Police have launched the nation's biggest arson investigation, "Operation Phoenix," and posted a A$100,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of suspects for deliberately starting a bush fire.

The tragedy is the worst natural disaster in Australia in 150 years. The previous worst bush fire was the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983 that killed 75 people.

The fires have increased pressure on the prime minister to take firm action on climate change as scientists blamed global warming for conditions that fueled the disaster. Reuters

FIREFIGHTER Dave Tree stares a bomb of water with a female koala, nicknamed Sam, amid a raging wildfire in Victoria state. AFP

Koala becomes wildfire star

SYDNEY—A THIRSTY KOALA rescued from the Australian wildfires has become a star on video-sharing website YouTube, providing much-needed relief from the disaster that has killed more than 180 people.

Firefighter Dave Tree stumbled across the female marsupial, nicknamed Sam, as he was battling blazes in Victoria state and was amazed when the parched animal greedily drank water from a bottle as he held her scratched paw.

"Things do survive the bush fire ... are you all right buddy," he says in the footage captured by a fellow volunteer on a mobile phone.

Tree described the koala as "looking pretty bewildered."

"This is amazing ... how much can a koala bear?" he said as he poured two bottles of water into her mouth.

Koalas' cuddly appearance sometimes leads city dwellers being likened to teddy bears, although in reality they are notoriously ill-tempered and possess powerful claws capable of inflicting savage wounds.

But Sam are plentifully as the firefighter gently stroked her.

The clip has attracted more than 30,000 hits on Wednesday and Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper is selling photographs of the extraordinary encounter, with proceeds going to volunteer fire fighting organizations.

The newspaper reported the animal suffered burns to her paws and arm in a bid of pain, but was on the road to recovery at the Mountain Ash Wildlife Shelter.

However, wildlife experts fear millions of native animals may have been killed in the firestorm.

"It will be in the hundreds of thousands, possibly millions," Gayle Chappell from the Stephen wildlife shelter told the national AAP news agency.

"We are not just talking the animals we are familiar with, there are gliders and all sorts of possums, sometimes (a mouse-like marsupial), lamaloons, birds ... there is so much wildlife."

Victoria police on Wednesday issued an appeal for supplies for pro-affected by the fires. AFP

Turtle shell melts in wildfires

SYDNEY—ONE TURTLE'S SHELL melted and fused to its body, while a baby wallaby's ears were fried to a crisp. Kangaroos moved their feet, and birds scorched by Australia's worst-ever wildfires plummeted from the sky.

The scope of the devastation to Australia's wildlife began to emerge on Wednesday with officials embarking millions of animals also perished in the inferno.

"It's just horrific," said Mal Morgan, president of the Statewide Wildlife Rescue Emergency Service in Victoria, the state where the raging fires most still burning. "It's disaster all around for humans and animals as well."

Animal shelters and clinics across the region have been inundated with hundreds of burned and blistered creatures who escaped the flames.

Many of the kangaroos rescuers found were suffering from burned feet, a result of dark-coloured behavior, are normal and. After escaping the initial flames, the creatures—which like to stay in one area—likely circled back to their homes, stepping their feet on the smoldering ground.

Workers at the Mountain Ash Wildlife Shelter in Possum, 150 kilometers east of Melbourne, were scrambling to salve the wounds of possums, kangaroos, lizards..."everything and anything," Colleen Ward, the shelter's manager, said.

"We had a couple come through that were just about melted—still alive," Ward said. "The whole thing was just fused together—it was just horrendous. It just goes to show how intense [the fire] were in the area."

The animals arriving appear unusual, but generally seem to understand the veterinarians are trying to help them, Ward said. Kangaroos and koalas are widespread in Australia and are not particularly scared of humans. AP

Octuplet doctor probed

LOS ANGELES—A NATIONAL MEDICAL SOciety is investigating whether a fertility doctor followed its guidelines when he implanted six embryos into a Southern California woman who gave birth to octuplets last month.

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine confirmed on Tuesday that it was investigating Nadya Suleman, who says she received in-vitro fertilization for all 14 of her children at the same Beverly Hills fertility clinic.

Suleman, 33, told NBC television's "Today" show that she was implanted with six embryos in each of her six pregnancies, resulting in four single births, a set of twins and the octuplets. No more than three embryos are transferred the norm for a woman her age, and fertility experts and medical ethicists have been critical of the Jan. 26 birth of the octuplets.

The society has contacted Suleman and her doctor, and is prepared to assist the Medical Board of California, which is also looking into the pregnancy, the society's president, Dr. R. Dale McClure, said in a statement.

"Our guidelines provide the flexibility to give each patient consideration individualized to her needs, and her best chance to become pregnant without raising high-order multiple pregnancy," McClure said. "However, it seems that the guidelines may not have been followed in Ms. Suleman's case."

Neither the society or the medical board identified Suleman's physician, Dr. Michael Kamrava.

Kamrava, a specialist who pioneered a method of implantation, was identified on Monday as a result of an NBC interview with Suleman, who said she went to the West Coast IVF Clinic in Beverly Hills and shot all 14 of her children there connected with help from the same doctor.

In 2008, Los Angeles TV station KCBS ran a story on infertility that showed Kamrava, the center's director, treating Suleman and discussing embryo implantation. AP

A CONFIRMATION picture shows (clockwise from top left) Josiah, Maliah, Jeremiah, Nariyah, Jonah, Noah, Maliyah and Isaiah—the octuplets born on Jan. 26 in Bellflower, California. AFP/KNBC

Texas 'Bathtub Killer' executed

HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS—A LOUISIANA man condemned for strangling and drowning a suburban Dallas woman, charged with the slaying of a second and blamed for the rapes of at least five other women was executed on Tuesday evening.

Asked if he had any final statements, Dale Devon Robinson remained silent and said: "My only statement is that no cases ever tried have been error free. Those are my words. No cases are error free."

Robinson then told the warden he would proceed. He received no statements for his death. Six relatives of his two murder victims watched as he took his final breath. He never looked at them.

Nine minutes after the lethal drugs began to flow, he was pronounced dead at 6:21 p.m.

Seventeen, 35, became known as the "Bathtub Killer" after two corpses at the same apartment complex in Arlington in 1996 were found dead in half-filled bathtubs, strangled, raped and bound with duct tape.

He was sent to death row for the Halloween Eve 1996 slaying of Pamela Prescott, 22, and charged but not tried for killing Christine Lee, 25, three months earlier.

Robinson is was the seventh condemned inmate executed in Texas this year and the first of two set to die this week.

"He personifies evil," said Greg Miller, the Tarrant County district attorney who prosecuted Robinson in 2001. "I've been doing this 35, 36 years. I've had others who have killed and done bad things. But he's at the top of the list." AP

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Neda approves 2 infra projects worth ₱6B

Korean aid to finance more than half of cost

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPment Authority yesterday approved two new projects worth P6 billion that would be funded with Korean aid even as the government plans its hopes on pump priming the economy through infrastructure development.

The projects are the P3.5-billion upgrade of the Puerto Princesa airport in Palawan and the P2.5-billion Samar Pacific coastal road.

Upgrading the airport is expected to help boost tourism activities—another sector that the government sees as a bright spot in times of a global financial crisis—while the coastal road will link remote towns on Samar Island.

Of the cost needed for the Puerto Princesa airport development project, P2.8 billion will come from a loan facility under the Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund while the government will shoulder P700 million.

The airport upgrade covers a new passenger terminal complex and a new access road off the national highway; widening of the runway strip and installation of an instrument landing system (ILS); a new perimeter fence, and improvement of navigational aid, air traffic control, communications and air field lighting.

On the other hand, the Samar coastal road is aimed at driving the development of potential agricultural lands and fishing grounds of Northern Samar and Eastern Samar as well as easing the movement of goods and services in the area.

The planned road stretches 108.4 kilometers and goes through the towns of Lavezares, Binigay, Mapanas, Gamay, and Laoang in Northern Samar, and Arteche and San Policarpio in Eastern Samar.

Of the total project cost, about P2.6 billion will also come from the Korean EDCF and P900 million from the government.

The government has earmarked P800 million this year to

NEDA, B2

INVESTORS DUMPED STOCKS yesterday, taking their cue from the bloodbath in Wall Street caused by concerns on whether recent US government initiatives were enough to perk up the battered American banking system.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index shed 1.33 percent to close at 1,867.70 on a wave of selling across all counters.

Chip-Mate Electric Co. continued to defy the two-day downturn. The utility rose another 3 percent to P19 from Tuesday's P15. Traders on Monday dominated the market, accounting for 40.6 percent of total volume.

About 1.3 billion shares changed hands at the local bourse valued at P2.11 billion.

The PSE had taken notice of the extraordinary run up of Manila Shoes and asked Manuel to explain, but the company said it did not have any information on who was buying the shares. Dealers said the rally may have something to do with the silent tug-of-war between the two major voting blocks in Manila Shoe—the Lopez family and Sun Miguel Corp.

"When the Dow falls by 4.6 percent overnight, it must be the US

STOCKS, B2

BANGKO SENTRAL CHIEF

Prudence, not backwardness, saved RP banks

By Michelle V. Rorne

LACK OF INVESTMENT SOPHIStication is often regarded as a blessing in disguise for the Philippine banking system, which has been saved from the same financial meltdown being experienced to advanced economies like the United States.

Unlike its counterparts in advanced economies, banks in the Philippines have not been a fan of derivatives, which have blamed for the collapse of most banks in the United States and Europe.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, however, refused to credit luck for the relatively minimal impact of the global crisis on Philippine banks.

For the BSP, it's not the perceived backwardness but sound regulatory policies implemented after the Asian financial crisis of 1997 that placed local banks in a much better position than most of their counterparts in rich countries.

"Our banks may not have been as active in taking on structured products in their banks as those in other countries, but one could hardly characterize that as backwardness. I believe this means conservatism of our bankers has helped to shield the domestic market from the adverse impacts of structured products and derivatives," Tetangco said.

He said banks have had a more standard in risk-taking guided by the policies of the BSP.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the regulatory environment should be credited for allowing banks in the Philippines to escape the financial turmoil offshore. After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the

PRUDENCE, B2

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Megaworld starts raising funds for ₱30-B capex

By Doris C. Dumlao

UPBEAT ON THE RESIDENTIAL condominium and business process outsourcing (BPO) office markets, property magnate Andrew Tan's Megaworld Corp. has mapped out a P30.6-billion fund-raising drive to roll out a P63-billion capital spending program for the next three years.

In a statement yesterday, Megaworld also announced it could accommodate some 14,000 new jobs in the BPO sector from 2009 to 2011 with the expected completion this year of five new BPO office buildings with more than 180,000 square meters of office space in Eastwood City, McKinley Hill and Newport City.

Megaworld has started its fund-raising with the sale of P1.4 billion worth of seven-year corporate notes to selected institutional investors. The transaction was supposed on Thursday, the company announced.

The premier property developer also announced from approval by its board to generate another P9 billion over the next three years from the offering of preemptive rights with detachable warrants to existing holders of common shares. The rest of the P30-billion, medium-term capital spending program will be covered via internally generated funds.

"Megaworld continues to be confident about the property market especially the sustainability of its two-pronged core business focus, namely the mid-income residential and BPO office markets," the company spokesperson Francisco Canson said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"The company has decided to increase its capital base further to ensure that Megaworld can continue developing its five-to-ten-year expansion plans," he said.

The company is primarily engaged in the development in Metro Manila of large-scale mixed-use planned communities, or community townships, that integrate residential, commercial, educational, leisure and entertainment components. Its six major township projects are the 17-hectare Eastwood City in Quezon City; the five-hectare Forbes Town Center and the 10-hectare McKinley Hill township in Taguig City; the 25-hectare tourism-oriented Newport City in Pasay; the five-hectare Maritime Garden City in Asuncion Del Rey, Cebu; and the forthcoming City-place in Clubhouse, Manila.

In an additional statement, Megaworld said the new fund-raising program would enhance its capital base, "ensuring that it can ride out the pitfalls of financial turmoil and maximize its market leadership while capitalizing on new opportunities along the way."

A detachable warrant gives the holder the right to purchase an underlying security at a specific price. Megaworld's warrants and underlying shares will be listed on the PSE.

Megaworld will offer preemptive rights to holders of common shares at one share for every four common shares at an exercise price of 35 each. Stockholders subscribing to the capital call will be entitled to detachable warrants at no cost at four warrants for every five rights shares.

Sees 14,000 new BPO jobs in 2 years

Bourse reconsiders fine on SMC

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange yesterday agreed to reconsider a monetary penalty imposed on San Miguel Corp. in relation to the non-disclosure of the latter's deal to buy a 27-percent stake in Manila Electric Co.

"Disney is formed that the exchange accepts the corporation's explanation on the matter and hereby grants its request for reconsideration," PSE head of issuer regulation Ray Joseph Enrile said.

This was after San Miguel wrote to the PSE explaining why it should not be penalized for non-disclosing the signing of an agreement with the Government Service Insurance System to buy out the latter's stake in Meralco.

In a letter to the PSE dated Feb. 10, San Miguel spokesperson Ferdinand Constantino said the company had made sufficient disclosure on the buyout deal with GSIS, and that the P50,000 fine imposed by the bourse became "not fair and equitable."

"We therefore respectfully request that the fine be withdrawn, and that the period for compliance be suspended while our request for reconsideration remains pending," Constantino said.

San Miguel was penalized for not disclosing the date of the actual signing of the deal with the GSIS.

Doris C. Dumlao

Stocks . . .

From page B1

stock market that triggered local share prices to have declined the way it did. There is no other reason," First Metro Investment Corp. vice president Ed Sandoval Banzuela said. "This is not to imply, however, that all of the Dow Industrial Stock components [and] shares will follow."

There were 68 declines against 23 gainers and 59 unchanged stocks yesterday. Doris C. Dumlao

PARAÑAQUE Medical Center chair Manuel V. Pangilinan addresses guests and officials of the hospital during the inauguration of its annex building in Makati. MIKE DE SILVA

Philex raises capital stock to ₱8B

By Rica T. Gichoco

PHILEX MINING CORP., THE COUNTRY'S biggest miner, yesterday said it was giving stock dividends and raising its authorized capital stock to P8 billion to support various projects.

"We will use the additional capital to fund our projects," company president Ernesto Ventura Jr. said without going into details.

Philex earlier said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange that its board of directors approved a resolution to increase the company's authorized capital stock from ₱5 billion, divided into 5 billion shares, valued at P1 each, to P8 billion at P1 apiece.

The board also approved a 25-percent stock dividend. The number of shares to be issued pursuant to the stock dividend will be 970.4 million shares, Philex said.

Stockholders will be asked for approval of the capital increase in a meeting on April 23.

Mr. Ventura said that Philex was initially focusing on reviewing mining prospects in the Benguet copper-gold project in Itogon after buying out partner Anglo American Plc for $55 million.

Philex, together with 40 percent-owned subsidiary Philex Gold Philippines Inc., took control of the project after disagreeing with Anglo on how to develop it. Findings that the Benguet project would not produce an acceptable rate of return.

The 23,184-hectare Benguet project was envisioned by the government to have an reserves of 500 million tons. Philex estimates that production could start by 2013.

Philex in 2008 garnered earned by Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd., which has indicated interest in increasing its stake in the mining company.

Neda approves 2 infra . . .

From page B1

continue work on the coastal road project, which has been late in national meeting last year to address issues that badly need good roads.

Although the road projects are for implementation from 2010 to 2013, the Department of Public Works and Highways has set to spent P287 million on it.

Last week, Neda director Dennis Arroyo said the government planned to start the first wave of infrastructure projects this year in an effort to pump prime the economy amid a global crisis.

Arroyo said P168 billion has been set aside for fast-moving, community-based projects such as farm-to-market roads and irrigation facilities.

On top of that, the government is partnering with the private sector on a P300-billion stimulus package for big-ticket items like the extension of the Skyway elevated toll road, new light rail lines and intermodal roads.

Prudence, not backwardness . . .

From page B1

raised standards for capital adequacy among other risk management measures, most banks must comply with.

"The banking system is governed by a conservative set of prudential regulations which benefit from the lessons of the Asian financial markets, the various reforms undertaken and international best practices in banking regulations," Guinigundo said.

Guinigundo said it was not that Philippine banks lacked sophistication, but that they had undertaken effort to go slow or in seeking its derivatives without the appropriate risk management tools in place.

Having said this, Guinigundo said the BSP does not really prohibit banks from investing in derivatives. The BSP is simply urging banks not to take excessive risk without ensuring it with corresponding risk management tools.

"Care should be taken when excess liquidity is available in the system; search for yields should always be accompanied by extra due diligence. Risk management models must be in place. The use of derivatives should not embolden us to go into excessive risk taking and encouraging creation to be sold," Guinigundo said.

The BSP official said one big mistake of banks in the United States and advanced countries is Europe was to sell their subprimes—loans extended to individuals from the subprime market—through derivatives. Packaging loans with the use of derivatives and selling them did not actually take away risks but simply transferred them to the buyers.

"It was a mistake for the banks to simply sell loans without due diligence because they thought they could just pass on the risks to the next fellow," Guinigundo said.

The subprime loan crisis in the latter half of 2007 eventually developed into a full-blown economic crisis for the United States. The crisis spilled over to advanced countries in Europe, where financial sectors were also heavily exposed to derivative investments.

The Philippines and some developing countries have been left largely unscathed because here loans the crisis being experienced in advanced countries. The impact on the Philippines has so far been on the real sector, as the weakening economies of the United States and Europe has led to shrinking income of Filipino exporters. The crisis has also led to job losses in many of the Filipino overseas, whose remittances serve as driver of consumption in the Philippines.

Treasure Steelworks plans 'green' projects

Former NSC out to earn carbon credits

By Amy R. Remo

TREASURE STEELWORKS CORP. (TSC) IS set to implement five year-seen projects that would not only improve its efficiency but also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and earn carbon credits.

In a statement, TSC, formerly National Steel Corp., said the current financial crisis and the urgency of the fight against climate change have pushed it to use energy consumption and use captured gas from its billet-making plant to generate electricity.

TSC said this would qualify he carbon credits under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol.

Carbon credits are a key component of national and international emissions trading schemes that have been implemented to mitigate global warming and represents a new revenue stream for the steel firm.

Under the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol, companies can gain revenues from carbon credits if they implement projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In particular, TSC said it would install new electric arc and ladle furnaces and use injected waste gas for production.

The replacement of old electric arc furnaces will reduce power consumption.

Meanwhile, the electricity to be generated from the capture of waste gas, which is generated by the blast furnace, will replace electricity from the grid, it added.

These "green" activities are contained in a recently signed Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement (Erpa) wherein TSC would be assisted in the development of its carbon assets by the Philippine office of carbon services company Ecosecure Inc.

TSC operates a billet-making plant with in a 20-hectare complex in Bgao City, Luzon del Norte.

It is the largest billet-making plant in the Philippines in terms of installed capacity at 360,000 metric tons a year. This would double upon completion and remodeling of the country's first blast furnace by June this year.

APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL SALES AGENT (GSA)

Applications are invited by the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation from reputable and financially sound firms/companies for the appointment of Passenger GSA in Manila, Philippines for the representation and soliciting of its sales base. Such firms/companies must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Should be a locally registered firm/company.
2. Should have experience in the field of Passenger Sales.
3. Trading Licenses as per local laws must be known preference will be given to parties having a proven track record in the relevant field.
4. Applicant should not be an employee of any other agent, its owners, directors/shareholders should have not been involved in bankruptcy/liquidation proceedings or had a bankruptcy record or any petition of bankruptcy/liquidation filed by or filed against any of any other firm/company.
5. Office should be preferable at airport but are also easily accessible on general public with ample parking space.
6. Should have qualified staff that has the ability of selling international air travel.
7. The applicant should have minimum paid-up capital investment required under local laws. Balance Sheet & Profit and Loss Accounts not older than six months at the time of application duly audited by a Chartered Accounting Firm. Additionally Bank Guarantee will also be required.
8. Validity of GSA Agreement will be initially for three years. Other terms and conditions of the General Sales Agency Agreement would be negotiable.
9. All documents of company profile must be submitted along with the application.
10. Any other document/information if so required will be intimated prior to the appointment.

Pakistan International Airlines Corporation reserves the right to reject or accept any application without assigning any reason or cause thereof.

Interested parties may send their applications along with supporting documents mentioned above in ENGLISH on the following address through registered mail or courier service not later than 30 days from the date of this advertisement.

PIA HEAD OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM No. 203-B
KARACHI AIRPORT - PAKISTAN
E-Mail: shoaib@piac.com.pk

PIA
The Pride of Pakistan

CAGELCO II

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the supply and delivery of ELECTRICAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENTS required for the pursuance of CAGELCO II Projects.

To be qualified, bidder must have fully complied with the following:

1. Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Committee Chairman, Clarence S. Jacinto)
   a. Company Profile
   b. Business Registration
   c. Business Permit
   d. BIR/VAT Certificate
   e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
   f. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years
   g. Financial Statement
   h. Compliance with the most technical specifications
2. Must be able to pay (₱ 2,000.00) for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bids without any reason, waive any formality therein, accept/or proposal most advantageous to the cooperatives and absorbs no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that no award will be made.

Pre-bid conference and bidding schedules shall be informed to all qualified bidders through fax and mails.

Deadline for submission of requirements: February 27, 2009

(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. YOROBELLAS
General Manager

Pacific Online, PCSO to sell 30M lottery cards

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LOTTERY EQUIPMENT provider Pacific Online Systems Corp. has inked an agreement with the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), its main client, to distribute 30 million instant lottery tickets.

Dubbed Scratch-it Diamond Anniversary Series, the new batch of instant lottery tickets will mark PCSO's celebration of its 75th foundation anniversary, said Pacific Online in a disclosure.

The Diamond Anniversary Series is expected to be launched in April 2009.

It will add to the line of instant lottery tickets in the market, namely Bell-Her 3s, Mega Money, Double Dollars, Gold Rush and Fast Cash.

Pacific Online is the online lottery system provider of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Last July, Pacific Online said the PCSO authorized the corporation to sell an additional 20 million Scratch-it tickets at ₱20 a ticket, or equivalent to additional sales of ₱400 million for PCSO.

Also last September, Pacific Online said it has inked an agreement with Metropole Systems Inc. (Metropole) for the latter to distribute Pacific Online's instant Scratch-It lottery tickets to stores in the nations of the Metro Rail Transit line 3.

Metropole is the owner and operator of 22 retail stores outlets in 13 MRT3 stations.

Pacific Online said these outlets provide transit information and fleet and services in the public as well as mall concessionaire goods to patrons of MRT3, which would include lottery tickets.

The company's consolidated revenues for the 12 months ending November last year hit ₱670 million with the November sales contributing as a heavy piece done mined due to high-jackpot lottery games.

Pacific Online expects to post slower growth this year despite the economic turmoil as most Filipinos buy lottery tickets with the hope of hitting the jackpot.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
5F Ironstone Bldg. II, Brgy. Parian, Calamba City
Telefax Nos.: (049) 545-0301

February 12, 2009

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permit/s.

	Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National (Nationality)	Position
1.	SUMIKIN PHILIPPINES Corporation Pres. Street, Sto. Rosa City	Mr. Junghee Kim (Korean)	Vice President
2.	MITSUBISHI A.C. INC. Mitsubishi Cement Corporation Cavite	Mr. William Ryan (Korean)	General Manager / Director
3.	LAGUNA AUTO PARTS Alaminos (Tagapo), Sta. Rosa City	Mr. Yoshiyuki Sugawara (Japanese)	Technical Advisor
4.	TOYOTA A.C. MECHANICAL TRAINING Inc. Laguna Blvd., Sto. Rosa City	Mr. Soo-Min Choo (Taiwanese)	Consultant

If you have any further interest/objection in the above mentioned applications please communicate with this Regional Office.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, JR., CESO III
Regional Director

ISABELA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Alibagu, Ilagan, Isabela

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

Isabela II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ISELCO II) is complying with the Energy Regulatory Commission's (ERC) Resolution and Memorandum of Circular No. 07-06 promulgating the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and the Revised IRR of RA 9184 issued by the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) under Resolution No. 09-2006 dated July 12, 2006 and Resolution No. 11-2007 dated August 15, 2007 and hereby promulgates the following rules and regulations governing the pre-qualification, bidding and awarding of contracts for the procurement of the Infrastructure Projects and Goods and Consulting Services covered by the Procurement Activities for the Calendar Year 2009 and Fiscal Year 2009 and Beyond Contracts with the Duration Thereof.

Bidding will be conducted through competitive bidding procedures and is open to all pre-qualified bidders as provided for in the Philippine Electrical Cooperatives Procurement Guidelines and Procedures (PECPGP) and to the Philippine Electrical Cooperatives Procurement Guidelines and Procedures (PECPGP) and to the following requirements: Bidders should comply with the following requirements: Registered and current valid business permit to the Philippine Electrical Cooperatives Procurement Guidelines and Procedures (PECPGP) and to the following requirements:

a. Company Profile
b. Business Registration
c. Business Permit
d. BIR/VAT Certificate
e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
f. List of Power Supply Customers for past three (3) years
g. Financial Statement
h. Compliance with the most technical specifications

Accredited Bidders shall secure the Bidding Documents during the Pre-Bid Conference. Terms.

THE PRE-BID AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Isabela II Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Alibagu, Ilagan, Isabela
Telephone
Telefax No. : 078-622-7196
E-mail : isabela2@yahoo.com; isabela2coop1_mail@yahoo.com

Schedule of activities are as follows:

Release of Invitation to Bid (non-submission)	February 13, 2009
Pre-Bidding Conference	February 20, 2009
Deadline for submission of letter of intent to bid	February 20, 2009
Opening of Bids	February 27, 2009
Bid Evaluation	February 27, 2009 to March 3, 2009
Post Qualification	March 4, 2009 to March 5, 2009
Notice of Award	March 6, 2009
Contract and Public Bidding	March 11, 2009 to March 13, 2009
Notice to Proceed	March 16, 2009
Deadline for submission of contract negotiations (APP-CSE and NCB)	March 16, 2009
Start of Bidding Documents (non-refundable) (Rs. 10,000.00)	

ISELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accept/or proposal most advantageous to the cooperatives and absorbs no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that no award will be made.

(Sgd.) ARTURO A. TUMBAGA
Officer in Charge

Otto Energy seeks contract extension

AUSTRALIAN FIRM OTTO ENERGY LTD. has asked the Department of Energy (DOE) to extend its oil exploration contracts covering offshore Palawan and East Visayan blocks.

In a disclosure to the Australian Securities Exchange, Otto said it was in talks with the government about extending the field over areas covered by Service Contract (SC) 38, also known as the Calamian Oil Fields and SC 51 covering the East Visayan basin.

Otto Energy has a 99 percent working interest in SC 38 and 88 percent in SC 51.

The company said it wanted an extension as it could drill a well and conduct extended well tests.

According to Otto Energy's estimates, the Calamin field has the potential to produce close to 40 million barrels of oil, of which 6.44 million barrels are recoverable.

For SC 51, Otto said it would also drill an exploratory well, should the DOE extend its program that is expected to end on March 8, 2009.

Late last year, Otto entered into surveys of the proposed August 1 and Bishop 1 drilling locations, which have a combined potential of about 200 million barrels of recoverable oil.

However, environmental are assessments of these locations were suspended in October 2008 at the request of the DOE.

But both SC 38 and 51, Otto said it was in discussions with potential partners that are expected to help finance the drilling of the exploration wells, the company added.

Meanwhile, Otto also disclosed that SC 69, its most recent mineral area located between the north and south blocks of SC 51, has good oil and gas potential. *Amy R. Remo*

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Visayan Fil. Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

WAREHOUSING SERVICES FOR NFA CEBU CITY

LEASE OF 4M AREA OF 6,000 SQ. METERS
FOR GRAINS WAREHOUSE STORAGE SPACE

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, through its Cooperative Budget for 2009 intends to apply the sum of ₱[illegible] MILLION AND HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND (₱), ₱1,150,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the lease of 4M area of 6,000 sq. meters for grains warehouse storage space for NFA Cebu City.

Province	Location	Projected Volume to be stored in bags	Aggregate Area (sqm)	Rate/Sqm	Total ABC (Pesos)	Monthly Fee (Pesos)
CEBU	Cebu City	100,000	4,000	₱ 95.00	₱ 190,000.00	₱ 4,000.00

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary, pre-qualification criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A of RA 9184 (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidders should have completed within the period specified in the Philippine Bidding Documents (PBDs) a contract similar to the Project. For this purpose, similar contracts shall refer to contracts for the lease of warehouse storage space for NFA Cebu City and must be at least 50% of the ABC of this bid or its equivalent in the amount of ₱[illegible] MILLION AND HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND (₱) ONLY. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the bid opening. Following are the schedule of bidding activities:

ACTIVITY	SCHEDULE (Date/Time)
1. Issuance of Bidding Documents	February 13 - 19, 2009
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	February 20, 2009 @ 1:00 PM
3. Opening of Bids	March 03, 2009 @ 10:00 AM

The NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND/OR ALL BIDS, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat, NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, Bonbon, Cebu City. The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY will require the complete set of Bidding Documents, only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount indicated in the above notice. The Bidding Documents shall be reviewed personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

Bids are eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any amount, manner, acceptable, and not lesser than a percentage of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid, in the following forms and percentages and in any combination thereof:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount (% of ABC) to be Bid
Cash/Cashier's/Manager's Check Bank Draft/Guarantee/Irrevocable Letter of Credit Issued by Universal or Commercial Bank	One Percent (1%)
Surety Bond Callable on Demand Issued by a Surety or Insurance Company	Two (2) and Percent (2.0%)
Bid Securing Declaration	Not to be Bid Percent (1.5%)

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders or their respective representatives who choose to attend the bidding. Late bids shall not be accepted. Acceptance of the bid will be subject to post-qualification (Bidder in Section 41 and December 31, 2010, is post-completion of submission of evidence by NFA additional to applicable).

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY reserves the right to accept most advantageous to the government or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and not award contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
(MAJ. B. CHONG)
Bonbon, Cebu City
Tel/Fax(0): (32) 253-3838
email address: nfacebu@yahoo.com.ph
Fax #(032) 254-0000
website: www.nfa.gov.ph

(Sgd.) MAJ. B. CHONG
BAC Chairperson

Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION - UPPER PAMPANGA RIVER PROJECT - PHASE II
Angeles Irrigation Office
Sto. Rosario, Magalang, Pampanga
Tel. Nos. (045) 455-0000 and (045) 455-0001

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
Ministerial Procurement Service (MPS)
Lopez Bldg., Quezon Avenue
Quezon City, Philippines
Date: February 12, 2009

This is an invitation to Bid/Negotiation (NAME) for Indefinite Quantity of Goods (Medicines) to be delivered at the Ministerial Procurement Service (MPS) Warehouse, Quezon City, Philippines. Bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, namely:

For items (1) under delivery:
- Must have at least 5 years experience in the same business
- Must have at least 10 clients with similar requirements
- Must have a valid and current Mayor's/Business permit
- Must have a valid and current Tax Clearance
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate

For items (2) under delivery:
- Must have at least 5 years experience in the same business
- Must have at least 10 clients with similar requirements
- Must have a valid and current Mayor's/Business permit
- Must have a valid and current Tax Clearance
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate

For items (3) under delivery:
- Must have at least 5 years experience in the same business
- Must have at least 10 clients with similar requirements
- Must have a valid and current Mayor's/Business permit
- Must have a valid and current Tax Clearance
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate
- Must have a valid and current Philippine Government Procurement Eligibility (PGPE) Certificate

The procurement will be conducted through competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pre-qualification criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, namely:

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Ministerial Procurement Service (MPS) Warehouse, Quezon City, Philippines and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given above from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of ₱[illegible] (₱[illegible]). The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

A pre-bid conference will be held on March 11, 2009 / 9:30 a.m. at the MPS Warehouse Quezon City, Philippines. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before March 13, 2009 / 9:30 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following forms and in the amount or percentage stated below:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount (% of ABC) to be Bid
Cash/Cashier's/Manager's Check Bank Draft/Guarantee/Irrevocable Letter of Credit Issued by Universal or Commercial Bank	One Percent (1%)
Surety Bond Callable on Demand Issued by a Surety or Insurance Company	Two (2) and Percent (2.0%)
Bid Securing Declaration	Not to be Bid Percent (1.5%)

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders or their respective representatives who choose to attend the bidding. Late bids shall not be accepted. Acceptance of the bid will be subject to post-qualification (Bidder in Section 41 and December 31, 2010, is post-completion of submission of evidence by NFA additional to applicable).

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY reserves the right to accept most advantageous to the government or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and not award contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
(MAJ. B. CHONG)
Bonbon, Cebu City
Tel/Fax(0): (32) 253-3838
email address: nfacebu@yahoo.com.ph
Fax #(032) 254-0000
website: www.nfa.gov.ph

(Sgd.) MAJ. B. CHONG
BAC Chairperson

BUSINESS

RP economy expected to grow faster this year

Unemployment problem also seen to get worse

By Michaella V. Ramos

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY may actually grow faster this year than in 2008—backing the forecasts of most analysts who anticipate a slowdown.

But the downside to 4.5% Kim Ing's projections for 2009 is the problem of unemployment, which the secretary from re-predicts go from bad to worse.

4.5% Kim Ing sees the economy recovering growing by 4.8 percent this year—an acceleration from last year's 4.6 percent—aided by the government's commitment to shore up public spending and the easing of inflation, which is expected to boost personal consumption.

But 4.5% Kim Ing also said that the country needed a growth of at least 6 percent to help prevent unemployment from rising.

"[GDP may grow] 4.8 percent this year. This is premised on domestic demand benefiting from low inflation, greater government spending, low interest rate and stable remittances," said Joe Lorenzo, AFX Kim Ing regional economics desktop an economic forum organized by Security Bank yesterday. "But this] is not high enough to absorb the labor force coming on a year every year to the Philippines."

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that the country's jobless rate eased at 8.8 percent as of October last year, higher than the 8.3 percent recorded in the same month the year before. The rise in unemployment rate was blamed on the economy's slowdown, with investments going down, dampening job-generation efforts.

The NSO report said there were 2.52 million unemployed Filipinos in October, comprising 6.8 percent of the country's total labor force of 37 million during the month.

"The economy is not going to fall, but neither will it be on a bed of roses. What we want to see is sufficient employment, but this is not going to happen," Lorenzo said.

While the economy is likely to grow this year, the growth of people looking for jobs would be faster, she added.

The economist said, however, that while unemployment problems could worsen, the Philippines would still be better off than other countries, where economies have been badly hit by the global financial crisis.

On remittances, Lorenzo said she saw this growing between 5 and 6 percent this year, slower than the over 20-percent growth witnessed in the 2000s. She said it was unlikely for remittances to contract because jobs of many Filipinos are in recession-proof sectors like education and medical. healthcare. Demand for health workers and teachers are still high abroad despite the financial crisis, she said.

With help from continued growth in remittances, she said, the country would manage to stay comfortably liquid. She said the country's current account, balance of payments would continue to be in surplus, and the gross international reserves would remain healthy.

The Medco story

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Nagata-Alejarra

THE MINDANAO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Council (Medco) was established on March 19, 1992 through Executive Order No. 512 signed by then President Corazon C. Aquino.

The aim is to promote and coordinate the active participation of all sectors to effect the socioeconomic development of Mindanao through a holistic and integrated approach. The council was placed under the supervision of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process.

It was also created to address the need to promote and strengthen inter-regional linkages and ensure the integrated viability of programs and projects in Mindanao.

Frontline services

Medco was designated to work with the local government units, which would serve as frontline entities, to help realize the development of specific geographical areas.

The Bukidnon Chamber of Commerce of Mindanao partnered with Medco in promoting investments and economic activities for my economic advocacy work for Mindanao. I had the chance to work closely with the first Medco chair, Paul Dominguez, and later on with Jess Dureza, who is now legal counsel of Malacañang.

The agency became a source of pride for Mindanaoans. Whenever I am invited to talk about investments and businesses, I would never fail to mention Medco and its role in enhancing trade and economic relations significantly. It is only in Mindanao that you can find such a lively vibrant trade district in these only-in-our-islands' economic development and poverty reduction.

On May 23, 2008, then President Joseph Estrada signed EO No. 364 transferring Medco to act as official and permanent Philippine Coordinating Office (PCO) for Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Philippines—East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). It maintained close ties among members of BIMP-EAGA and it did serve the purpose of its creation—the development of Mindanao.

President Macapagal-Arroyo signed EO 727 on Dec. 13, 2008, placing Medco under the oversight of the National Economic Development Authority (Neda) as it aims to be aggressive with a more focused approach for the continuing economic growth of Mindanao.

Neda will have general supervision over the agency, formulating integrated socioeconomic development plans, policies and programs, as well as implementing its regular functions.

Many in Mindanao were surprised when they learned about the transfer of Medco to the oversight of Neda, questioning the motive behind the change of setup. The business sector claims that Medco would be more effective and relevant if it were under Neda. History would show that Medco really served Mindanao very well.

Medco had been successful in handling gigantic tasks which were not limited to project development and management. It also was able to source fund not only for its agency but its projects. Members of its staff are known to reach the smallest and most remote towns in Mindanao. Close consultations with people have defined a portion of the island for Medco's strength.

Integrity

Over the years, Medco maintained its credibility in the eyes of foreign funding agencies mainly due to the integrity of its staff and the projects it had facilitated. Medco certainly knows how to work the talk.

They had maintained valuable data vital to making critical decisions for economic development. Its database became the only source of information that could accurately gauge Mindanao's growth. This agency was engaged to any question about Mindanao.

It is very hard to compare the projects of Neda and Medco. Medco became a training house for Mindanao projects. It is effective and efficient in representing the country in the BIMP-Eaga and in other international bodies.

A House bill, which proposes to convert Medco into the Mindanao Economic Development Agency, is currently being pushed.

The bill aims for consistency and continuity of policy support.

"Historically, there's no consistency of policy support," said Virgilio Leyretana, current chair of Medco. "The consequences of that are loss of time and energy ... and continuity in terms of programs and projects."

Gigil Sagun Blatt is an advocate for the development of the region. She is chair of Gigil Sagun Foundation (www.gigilsagunfoundation.com); president, Philippine Golf Centers alliance and Mindanao Irish Inc Schools Association, and Mindanao representative to the Export Development Council. E-mail comments to gsblatt2@yahoo.com.

2,000 gov't workers may soon lose jobs

By Raoul W. Dominguez

SOME 2,000 GOVERNMENT employees are bracing themselves for the first wave of job cuts under a Malacañang plan to rationalize agencies under the executive branch.

Jay Dy Galvez, president of the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage), said in an interview that 801 employees of the National Food Authority and about 1,200 workers at the Bureau of Customs were in danger of losing their jobs.

"Both workers were given notices of redundancy to Devon, but said they were given 60 days to decide if they want to transfer to other agencies or opt for early retirement," Galvez said.

He said most of those who get their papers were low-ranked workers, like those who are manually handling sackfuls of rice in NFA warehouses.

Galvez added the BOC employees were also given their notices early this month.

According to the BOC Employees Association (Busted), 700 of its members have received such notices and were given up to 15 days to decide on which option to choose.

Duane said in a statement the automation of warehousing operations would result in the removal of security guards, warehousemen and storekeepers, as well as workers detailed with the bureau's entry permit and import commitment note division.

In 2009, President Macapagal-Arroyo signed Executive Order No. 888, which calls for a "strategic review" of agencies under the executive branch with the aim of weeding out redundancies or overlapping.

On January, Commissioner Phoning Secretary Ralph G. Recto said rationalization would have to be considered at a time when domestic and overseas jobs are under threat.

Recto said the Department of Budget and Management, which is the lead agency in the rationalization initiative, has so far approved related plans covering four departments, including 13 attached agencies, 11 government-owned and -controlled corporations and 13 entities classified as "other agencies."

Those four plans alone would affect a total of 7,899 regular employees and 1,189 contractual or casual workers, which translates to possible savings of at least P707 million for the government.

Courage's Galve said those plans included the deactivation of the Quezon Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp., which would affect some 1,000 employees.

"The rationalization plan should be scrapped," Galve said, adding that the government should ensure job security instead of taking them away at a time of crisis.

With surplus from South, corn supply to even out

By Riza T. Olchondra

CORN MAY BE IN TIGHT SUPPLY in Luzon, but a surplus in other parts of the country will be enough to tide over end-users, like farmers, until the summer harvest starts next month, Philippine Maize Federation president Roger Navarro said in an interview.

"Right now, we may have a corn surplus of 200,000 metric tons (MT) in Visayas and Mindanao, or it's all going to Luzon," Navarro said.

He added that the difference in supply will help bring the Luzon deficit to zero or the demand shortfall between harvests as well as the lingering effects of high fertilizer prices during the planting season last year.

"In July 2007, a bag of fertilizer was around P700 per bag," Navarro said. "In July 2008, it was P2,800 per bag."

The private sector has initially forecast that there may be a shortfall of 800,000 MT for the entire year, although stakeholders said that the estimate could only be firmed up after the summer harvest in March and April. The government, meanwhile, has said that supply may fall short by only 300,000 MT.

In any case, the government has allowed broiler and poultry raisers, as well as hog raisers, to import a combined 200,000 MT of corn for their feed needs.

The corn will be imported through the National Food Authority with a 35-percent tariff.

Corn supply is linked to livestock and poultry production since it is the main component for feeds. Poultry and livestock farmers earlier expressed fears that a corn shortage that year could raise prices and discourage farmers from increasing production.

In a production forecast released in January, the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics said that the government estimates that the total of 2009 could dip by 2.63 percent to 3.21 million MT based on farmers' standing crop and planting intentions.

Filinvest fined for nondisclosure of subsidiary bank's acquisitions

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE has imposed a fine on Filinvest Development Corp. for P1 million for its decision a deal inked by its banking subsidiary East West Bank to acquire the local consumer finance arm of the American International Group.

SEC chief operating officer Brey Joseph Rubio yesterday informed PDEC that it would have to pay a fine of P50,000 within five trading days.

"Please be informed that while the corporation is not a party to the share sale transaction, as a listed company and as the parent of East West, PDEC has the obligation to provide the complete details of the transaction and could deem of the agreement between East West and AIG to properly inform its stockholders and the investing public," Rubio said.

Citing the revised disclosure rules of the PSE, Rubio also argued that the deal became would require listed companies to disclose a schedule or agreement between a subsidiary, whether listed or not.

East West Bank, an unlisted commercial bank, recently won the bidding for AIG Philam Savings Bank and its sister finance company.

"Keeping in mind the interest of the investing public, the Exchange has to ensure that investors have access to the important details of the agreement, hence, it cannot exempt the corporation from the rules," Rubio said.

Meanwhile, property magnate Andrew Tan's PDC last week disclosed that its board of directors had approved the issuance of up to P2.5 billion worth of corporate notes to institutional investors.

It was earlier reported that British banking giant HSBC was mandated as lead manager for the issuance, proceeds from which would be used for PDC's expansion projects.

PDC is engaged in the planning and development of integrated residential and commercial communities, landbanking, development and sale of residential and commercial lots, and the development and leasing of retail and office space and land in these communities.

Also, the contribution of its commercial banking business has been growing over the years.

LIFESTYLE Food

Edited by Thelma Sinson San Juan

Your choice: Fine meal in your own city suite, or at a balcony atop hill in Baguio

SCALLOP and Bean Sprout Risotto, and, inset, Celeste's Suite 357

HAVE YOU BEEN TO the boutique hotel on Pasay Road, Makati, called Hotel Celeste?

Its suites are perhaps the hippest, most beautiful I've seen around town. The rooms are too huge but rich and opulent without being gaudy, with character—charming, spatial and picturesque.

By itself, the suite sets the mood for a night of romance—but then again there is more. Famous French chef Cyrille of Restaurant Cyrus Cheated in the same hotel) unveils his French menu and collaborates with Celeste's executive chef Jeffrey Ang to create a menu that is simply divine, served in your hotel suite on a table set to perfection, with your own servers hovering your every whim.

Le Diner de la Suite Valentin consists of appetizer of King Crab in Celery Remoulade, Sweet Pepper and Fresh Herbs, Emulsionned Citrus Sauce; Scallop and Bean Sprout Risotto; Marinated and Seared Scallops; Bean Sprout Risotto; Parsley Juice

YOUR CHOICE 11

From French to Eurasian menus

Good lovin' and eatin' —below P500

Your best bets in the time of recession

By Jake Ramirez
Correspondent

I SAID SAID, "LOVE DON'T COST A THING." But of course, she is fanatic! Lopez, the late Marc Anthony, and they have millions of dollars to burn. But for us non-J.Los, spending on/for love is challenging in this economic downturn.

For those planning to dine on a budget, let us begin with/over and go straight to the matter, which is to fill one's stomach with good food. Here are dining options below P500 for two people:

Italian

Try Bravo at Power Mall, Mandaluyong, or Giannis 1 on 89 De la Costa St. in Salcedo Village, Makati. I swear by the goodness of their thin-crust pizza. Prices start at P150 for small pizzas and pasta starts at P200. There's good ambiance in both.

Another good Italian place is Pinto, which has been under the radar for some time. Its pizza is paper-thin, crunchy with one choice of toppings starting at P200. Branches are at Pinoy Centro, Salcedo Village, The Strip at The Fort, Greenhills, Ortigas and Eastwood City.

Chinese

Hap Chan and North Park are landmark destinations for quick and fast Chinese

MORE 11

Gustatory treats for Day of Hearts

ON FEB. 14, delight in gustatory treats at Mandarin Oriental, Manila. The Thrill offers Cream of Scallops, Mini Pina Hors and Foie Gras, Liquorice Lamb, Lemon and Sage Tempura, Celery Velvet and Cranberry and Poached Strawberries and Cream. White Chocolate Sponge Cake, and Plum Wine Jelly. Peace Lilies Hot Love buffet dinner includes long-stem red roses, gourmet eats and a glass of Moët et Chandon. Tin-Hau offers Cupid's Set Menu. Mandarin Deli offers chocolates and pralines until Feb. 14. Call 7580880 or e-mail momol-reservations@mobg.com.

DINING OUT

Bistro Mateo treats

Bistro Mateo offers Ladies lunch-genius. Grand Slam breakfast served with pancakes, Eggs Benedict, Breakfast Steak and Eggs, Tapa, Tocino, Arroz Caldo, Kare-Kare, Bringing Skills up Between to Mom, Bangus Sisi Pesto, Callos Marinara, Salpicado, Pasta with Pesto at Alpha, Barbecued Spare Ribs with Chopsuey, Pork Adobo with Sautéed Kangkong, Crunchy Fish Fillet with Mango-walnut Sauce, Caesar Salad, Genoise Tart's Chicken and Broccoli-wrapped Crispy fish in coconut cream sauce. Open from 7 a.m.-10 p.m. on weekdays and until 1 a.m. on weekends. Bistro Mateo is at Fronteras Walk at the Fort Bonifacio Complex.

MAX'S GIVEAWAY

Max's gives away heart-shaped paharan stocked with dark chocolate and topped with colored chocolate for a minimum P1,000-worth-of food purchase. Available from Feb. 13-14.

SWEET INDULGENCE

Richmonde Hotel's Lobby Cafe offers Chocolate Berry Cake and a bunch of Chocolate Rose Lollipops until Feb. 28. Call 8387777 local 1112.

UBE-YEMA CHEESECAKE

Cheesecake Etc. features ube-yema flavor. Other bestsellers are cashew and choco-dome cakes, choco-rose confection and mango passion. For the health-conscious, Cheesecake Etc. offers low-fat/savory-less/less-fat black and white, white chocolate pistachio, sugar-free cappuccino, choco-berry, mocha-toffee and fat-free mocha. Its new hot treats are brownie-cashewnut, mushroom-ball spaghetti, bread etc. baked fish fillet and onion pesto. Cheesecake Etc. is at The Podium, Shoemart-1, Blue Wave Complex-Mezzapod, Robinsons Place Manila, Tomas Morato Avenue, Greenhills Shopping Center, Ramon Avenue, Makati Emerald Avenue Center, Alabang Town Center, SM Mall of Asia, SM Megamall and Eastwood City Walk. Call 7811248 or 7421992.

COOL DESSERTS

Enjoy Iceberg's Belgian Chocolate Fondue, Ringbong's Revenge or Godzilla Grand Slammer and get Mexican Taco for free. Do not miss Iceberg's Super Halo-Halo, Parfaits, Splits, Milk and Fruits Shakes, Sundaes, Floats. Iceberg's tea service at Filinvest Avenue, QC, SM City Nuevo cebu, SM Mall of Asia, SM City Fairview, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center Terminal, Robinsons Galleria, Fontana Grove, Paranaque, Waterside Bridges Corner, Harbor Square CCP Complex, Rotation Center Mall, Pavilion Mall, Bevin Laguna, and Robinsons Place, Ermita. Also Visit Iceberg's Frozen Bake for Cream Dinner at San Miguel Brewery Inn Bay behind SM Mall of Asia and Iceberg's Chocolate Spoon Ice Cream Cafe in Robinsons Manila Mezzanine.

CAFE AND BUFFET

Cafe Ala-Ala features cream-of-the-crop with spinach, chicken, cheese and pine nuts, Pork Bagnet, Pumpkin Soup with Crispy Shallots and Sweet Capsicum, Chef's Salad Bar, Sardines in a Hamless, Ham and Cheese-Stuffed Chicken Supreme, Baked Fish Fillet Topped with Tomato, Mozzarella and Olives.

Penne Pasta Napolitana, Braised Vegetables and desserts of Crème Caramel with Pandan Gelin, Fresh Fruit Platter and Strawberry Swiss Roll. Cafe Ala-Ala is in Westgate, Alabang. Call 771-1281-83.

JOHN HAY AFFAIR

The Manor at Camp John Hay offers the most romantic amenities in a celebration of love until March 15.

Delightful surprises include welcome drink, free breakfast for two, and a hearty welcome feast with a bottle of wine. The treats also include 20-percent discounts at Le Chef restaurant and Pate Garden Health Spa. Call Baguio (074) 4246911 to 17, 58-33, 4420892, 4420911.

BLUSHIN' RHEDI

Chadoll offers Blushin' Brides, green tea blended with almond drops and strawberry and Grenadine syrup. Chadoll tea branches are MAM Terminal 2; Robinsons Ermita, Galleria and Pioneer; and SM The Block and Mall of Asia.

OSTRICH MEAT DELIGHTS

Hale & Hearty Diner features Ostrich Herbed Steak with Honey, Teriyaki Steak, Spaghetti with Ostrich Meatballs, Tapsilog, Salisbury Steak, Ostrich Burger, Ostrich Egg Omelet, Salmon Steak, Grilled Tuna, Mixed Garden Salad and Stir-Fried Vegetables. Pair your dinner with Peanut or Italian wine or unwind or sipping lemon. Hale and Hearty Diner is at Aguinaldo Highway near corner Magallanes Drive, Tagaytay City. Call 801-0374 to 147 or e-mail haleandhearty@ymail.com.

SOFITEL SIZZLERS

Sofitel Philippine Plaza's Spiral offers a spread of splendidness on Valentine's. Enjoy a buffet at Sunset Bar or a four-course menu at LeBar. Call 551-1000.

VALENTINE WEEKEND

Kenneth Xpresso Cafe features pizza, Italian meat and salads, pastas, and sandwiches and later on char-broiled steaks and grilled meat dishes. Indulge in its 22-inch Twelve Big Pancakes loaded with pepperoni, sausage, bacon and beef on veggies, garlic onions, peppers, mushrooms, black olives and new kinds of cheese. Other mouthwatering entrées are Spanish sardines, Brazilian bisharest, California-style all-meat taco and Hawaiian. The health-conscious can go for the vegetarian pizza or herb tuna melt composed of chunky tuna on top of white creamy slices covered with onion rings, mushroom slices and parsley. Kenneth Xpresso Café is at Jimmy Antonio cor. Sta. Rita Road, Subic Bay Freeport and at The Morning Place of SM City Clarkfield, Pampanga.

Celebrate Valentine's with premium credit-card perks

METROBANK CARD MASTERCard holders can enjoy special treats with a minimum single purchase of P750. Metrobank Classic card holders will get a free cocktail. Metrobank Preferred card holders will enjoy a free Cookies & Cream Frappe. Metrobank Gold and Metrobank Platinum card holders will get a free dessert.

All Metrobank credit card holders can enjoy free fish & Chips at Burgos Bistro upon purchase of any main entrée with the same or higher value.

CHELSEA'S Grandma's Sausage and Meatball Spaghetti

Your choice: Fine meal in your own city suite . . .

HONEYMOON Valentine at the Manor

CHEF Billy King

CHEF Cyrille Soreau

Good lovin' and eatin' –below P500

SAVORY Chicken House

ANDOK'S Makati Avenue

PASTO: Pizza

NEXT Door's Monk Pub

Restaurant C3

offerings. Most nights each have spent many an early morning gulping hot wonton noodle soups and eating dumplings in these places. And the interiors are not that bad either, except that most Shop Class outlets have hardwired fluorescent lights, the most unforgiving kind of light.

For those craving for good old fried chicken, there's Savory Chicken House, now in malls, with budget meals starting at P105 inclusive of quarter chicken and one side dish. Just add P30 for squid and pork soup. Yummy!

Filipino/Grilled

Andok's is the place to be if one is craving for grilled chicken and lechon, whether in Manila, Baguio or Boracay. You may add Bobbie Cobo, chicken or pork chop, the cure-hangovers. Recently, Andok's has opened its air-conditioned dining rooms, expanded its menu (more and interesting swaying on today).

Another place that has found a steady following is Tan Inasi Barbeque. A secret tanning still cooked outdoorsy in Ortigas Center were it is in Mandaluyong, it has just opened on Makati Avenue. A complete and decent meal starts at P78 for grilled barbeque on lempo.

For those who love lechon-baboy liver, crackles could check out Petra's Flies on Urban Avenue, Makati. This converts combines value-for-money with good interiors and chef Ed Quimson's cooking. Imagine dining, complete with ambience, minus the soot—that is why Petra's Flies has become very popular among the white-collared crowd for lunch and dinner.

Among the Bonggos, dinikan-inasal is popular fare. If one does not have extra money to get and an extra two hours for driving there, head off to Antonio's Grill in Tagaytay. Chef Antonio's version of dinikan inasal comes in two variants—spicy and spicy. For starts, they serve chopped onions, silig (chop) chili pepper), lucky chicken (tantanan) and bamboo (fresh garlic), a needle concoction that will increase body temperature to fight off Tagaytay's balmy weather.

If budget for gas does not permit, head off to JP's Mondoza Grille on Malugay Street in Makati or in New Manila. A popular hideout the mall dining place serving meal lovers, this is actor Joel Torre's new self-appointed place, a stone's throw away from Makati's Central Business District.

For those who can't stand the crowd like hot cardoz, head to Salcedo Weekend Market and order Bilugos fried burger (drop by Tony Antonio for a bottle of good Chilean wine) and sit down among the hordes or by the grass in Salcedo's Malugay Park and remind Julia Roberts and Richard Gere's telly moment in "Pretty Woman." Just do not overdo the FOA (public display of affection) and remember, this is still a public park with kids running around.

HALF Chan

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The son also rises

By Joy Rojas
Contributor

IF ITS FACEBOOK ACCOUNT BOASTS some 1,800 friends and counting, then's become Aoya, the Japanese grill and sushi bar along Tomas Morato Avenue, Quezon City, has gained popularity among those who thrive on the rave of top-notch Japanese cuisine.

"We're built on customer loyalty," says Voojay Villavicencio of his 30-year-old eatery. "There are over 120 restaurants in Tomas Morato alone, so if you come to us, I'm going to make sure you get your money's worth."

"I'D RATHER take a hit with my boss than to have a customer tell me he isn't satisfied with my food."

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Voojay Villavicencio, the man behind Joya, the Japanese resto, is stepping out of his dad's shadow

SESAME-crusted tuna tataki enhanced by honey-teriyaki vinaigrette

To make sure you get your money's worth."

In the year that Aoya (Japanese for "skilful") has been around, the restaurant has gained Japanese food lovers with its high-quality executions of traditional Japanese dishes, a feat Villavicencio achieves through his uncompromising attitude towards ingredients: never setting, lamp chops fresh, and make sure they come from the most reliable sources.

That he can do it with surprisingly modest price points is even more astonishing, but to Villavicencio, it's all about loyalty. "I'd rather take a hit with my boss," he says, "than to have a customer tell me he isn't satisfied with my food."

New menu

These days, Villavicencio is giving loyal customers even more reasons to visit: A new menu, "Aoya Evolution, Season 1 Episode 1," ushers in the arrival of 24 new dishes—10 from the sushi bar and cold-dish selection called "Cool by Tempuli Water," and 14 from the hot-dish selection "Crisp na Piso."

While the idea, says Villavicencio, who came up with the whole concept and menu with the help of his Japanese chefs in about two weeks, is to present diners with other options, it's also his way of "evolving" or "revolutionizing" Japanese food.

Mind you, this isn't fusion, a term he detests, but a different twist to the cuisine, "yet keeping the integrity of Japanese food," he explains. "Traditional Japanese food has always been soy-based. If you order sukiyaki, tempura, sashimi, or a sarak, they all are soy. I just wanted to give people more choices."

No interview with Villavicencio is complete without a mention of his father, veteran restaurateur Victor, or his successful chain of buffet restaurants (Kamayan, Salsalt, Dad's, and Triple V).

Comparisons cannot be helped, either, says Villavicencio, the waiter "is when people say Joya is a spin-off of Salsalt, except it's not a buffet." Still, this son appears to be slowly moving away from his father's formidable shadow.

Next up for the Japanese restaurant: a branch in Makati. "We're thinking of the mall area," says Villavicencio. Yes, the challenge of running a stand-alone restaurant away from an accessible shopping center "has only made me stronger," but Villavicencio knows the pleasure of running an outlet in a mall. "You gain more exposure," he says. And, by the way things are going, more friends on Facebook.

Joya is located at 233 Tomas Morato and E. Lopez Jr. Streets near the ABS-CBN Compound, QC. Call 376-6161 or 376-6332.

OYSTER and crayfish salmon sushi with tanigashi-laced ponzu

Corned beef with crisp potatoes

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

CORNED BEEF AND POTATOES SEEM TO complement each other perfectly. Usually the potatoes are sliced and cooked with the corned beef. Here's a new take on this combination: use potato chips instead. The chips add crunch and texture to the corned beef. You'll also save yourself the trouble of having to peel and slice the potatoes.

D.I.Y.

Corned Beef with Crisp Potatoes

2 tbsp cooking oil
1 onion, sliced
3-4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 180-gram cans corned beef
1 tsp liquid seasoning
1 Vet green peas, thawed
Salt, to taste (optional)
3 cups coarsely crushed potato chips or shoestring potatoes, divided

Heat oil in a skillet and sauté onion over low heat for about 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for 1 to 2 more minutes, making sure the garlic doesn't burn.

Break apart corned beef with a fork then add to skillet. Season with liquid seasoning. Cook stir with a heatproof spatula or wooden spoon until corned beef is crushed to desired doneness—very dry, crisp, or still slightly moist. Add green peas and heat through. Season with salt if necessary (see tips). Remove from heat.

Add 2 cups of the crushed potato chips and toss to combine. Transfer to a serving dish and top with remaining crushed potatoes.

Tips

- If the corned beef brand you use is on the salty side, you may not need to add salt while cooking. In addition, the potato chips may also be salted so additional salt may not be necessary.
- You can also use barbecue-flavored potato chips.
- To crush the potato chips, put them in a resealable plastic bag and pass a rolling pin over them. Don't crush them too finely as they remain their crunch.
- This is good eaten with rice or just as is.

ENTERTAINMENT

Tropical Hut Chicken Family Meal
Spec. Chicken ₱320
Spec. Chicken ₱420
₱320
₱420

A new thrill for Boyet

CHRISTOPHER DE LEON recently joined a team from Conservation International Philippines that released back to the sea a green turtle, better known as the pawikan.

The marine conservation group said it was the Lion's first celebrity as a member.

The green turtle (Chelonia mydas) was recovered in Hagonoy, Bulacan, by officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

It was released in Dalayan Bay part of the Verde Island Passage (between Batangas and Mindoro Oriental), host to the greatest concentration of marine species in the world.

"It felt great," De Leon said. He has been working with the local government of Lobo, Batangas, in establishing a marine sanctuary and hopes to get other artists to support marine conservation efforts and promote ecotourism.

Network calls for a probe

By Pocholo Concepcion

THE FILIPINO SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, Authors and Publishers Inc. (Filscap) is "fully supporting" singer-songwriter Gary Granada in his complaint of "exploitation" against broadcast network GMA 7.

In a statement sent by Filscap general manager Bobbit Gatdula to the media on Tuesday, the composers' group said: "Filscap fully supports Mr. Gary Granada, in an effort to protect and promote the integrity and welfare of composers and artists in general... We stand firm by our fellow member and creator (Granada) in the quest for a just resolution of his claims."

The issue was made public via an e-mail sent by Gary Ayson Hernandez to GMA Regional Southerner sing All by Himself-or" that Granada sent to friends, colleagues and the media. Attached to the e-mail was a 14-minute audio file where Granada alleged that she network aired a jingle for the Inauguration using music that "bore a striking resemblance" to something he had written.

He narrated that the network's marketing department first commissioned him to write the music of the TV commercial for the foundation's advocacy campaign, "I-Pil Huwag Itikhuyan."

Granada said his study tape was disapproved and the job was given to another songwriter. The finished commercial was aired before Christmas. In his audio file, Granada said the jingle used his study almost "note-for-note."

GMA 7 said it has "called the attention" of the second composer, but questioned Granada's accusation, pointing out that the network "did not write the music" in question.

Composers' association should settle the problem between its 2 members, says GMA 7

In a letter sent to Filscap dated Feb. 3, 2009, Dick B. Dover, network vice president for legal affairs, said: "The music was composed by another member of Filscap, Mr. Chara Unite ... GMA accepted the composition of Mr Unite in good faith... That, the matter is really a dispute between two of your members, which Filscap should therefore look into."

Granada on Tuesday protested that the other composer was not the issue. He stated on that, in producing the jingle, the network allowed the other composer access to his study tape.

With Marinel R. Cruz

Guess who's making Lani nervous?

LANI Mercado

LANI MERCADO, WIFE OF Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., said people who are convincing her husband to seek higher office are making her nervous.

Lani, who ran for governor of Cavite in 2004 but lost, would rather concentrate on being an actress and mother to their six kids than be the wife of the country's president or vice president. "It's a very big task ... a big decision to make," she told Inquirer last week.

She said it would mean moving aside her dress-like career.

"That's not going to be easy for me because acting is my first love," said Lani, who plays one of the lead roles in GMA 7's "Susan Dacanay ang Erangat!"

Bong and Lani are marking their 23rd wedding anniversary this year. They were married on May 28, 1986 in the United States.

What's the secret to their long-lasting marriage? "Patience and understanding," Lani said. "If you truly love your partner, you learn to accept things about him or her that you never thought you could. With Bong, I take one day at a time. I don't waste my energy on the small stuff."

Marinel R. Cruz

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS
Romance
ROMANCE AT THE ROBINSONS MALLS

Metro Society
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THE BIGGEST NAMES IN JAZZ LIVE IN MANILA
INTERNATIONAL ARTIST LINEUP
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SPYRO GYRA · MIKE STERN · KEN & BOLA TAYLOR
FABIO TURCHETTI · DAVE WECKL · MARCEL WORMS
FILIPINO POP AND JAZZ LINEUP
AQUARELA · BAYANG BARRIOS · BEMBOL ROCKERS
BRASS MUNKEYS · BRIGADA · CUBANELLA
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TED NICHOLOFF · NYKO MACA · PLAYGROUND · SINGSKATT
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MALL TOURS February 13, 14 & 21
EMBASSY SHOWS February 20-27
WORKSHOPS February 23-27, March 1-2
FESTIVAL SHOWS February 26, March 1, 2 & 4

One Night of LOVE and ROMANCE
For Your Love Only
Sheena Easton
February 24, 2009 | Shangri-La Manila

"CREAM SILK Dove ETHAN ALLEN POND'S SieMatic

Money in the bank

NOW THAT THE GLOBAL RECESSION is having people cut back on expenses, the entertainment industry is starting to feel the pinch. Recently, a number of musicals and dramas closed on Broadway, and some ventures in Hawaii have put big plans on hold.

In this downturn scenario, what (about prospects and savvy producers pursue)? Worried people want to forget their problems, so comedies are in. Depressed people feel strong need to be inspired, so religious and feel-good productions should similarly be welcomed. But they should be cautious: edgy inspiring shows are simplistic, smarmy and shallow. It pays to remember.

In the movies, "brand names" appear to be preferred by viewers, because they offer reassuringly familiar fare. Thus, the sixth Harry Potter film, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," is set for summer release—to see another "Transformers" outing, the next "Ice Age" installment, "The Pink Panther 2," the sequel to "Night at the Museum," they believe, up to "Twilight" ("New Moon")—no! Literally, the recent MMFF saw the successful showing of three updates on Peter Pan/Jason: "Shake, Rattle & Roll," "Mid-Nite," "Tinaga Ina."

What about entirely new productions? They would also be money in the bank, depending on one online, catalyst book and specific appeal to the huge youth market. Thus, hopes are high for the first "Transformers" movie and a Jonas Brothers concert filmed for the big screen.

How to know, entertainment indie producers would be far produced to find out of festivals, and hopes are high that new musicals will emerge.

Aside from nothing films however, indie movie people should work hand to solve their huge distribution problem. But you. Otherwise, too many indie productions won't make movies, their chosen ring their names and directors from carrying on.

That's money not ever making it to the bank—not the way to go in 2009.

NGC, Fox win awards

At the recent Promax BDA Asia 2008 held in Singapore, National Geographic Channel International and Fox International Channels won five gold awards and three silver awards.

Gold awards: Best Script, "Women Our Planet," Best Promotion new using program package, "Hunter Hunted," Best Print Campaign, "Inside The Emperor's Treasure."

Silver awards: Best Unlimited Material, "Inside The Emperor's Treasure."

Plus five awards for "Fetishes" for Best Bronze Campaign and Promotion (for "Dexter 2") and two awards for FOX Inclusive Box Unlimited Material (for "My Brilliant Brain") and Promotion (for "Pink Floyd").

Viewfinder

Nestor C. Torre

Feedback

From Irene C. Padua of Makati City: "I welcome the trend to more books about local show business and its stars and other big figures. After Dolphy and Ishmael Gonde, there should also be biographies of Fred Astaire, Elma Jones and Fernando Poe Jr., among others. Films it comes to this fact, a book on Manuel Morato is my favorite.

"I think the book on Mina should come out this year, to add to her good reputation as an actress, especially since she may run for a top political position in 2010. Other good books could be about movie queens, child stars and action heroes."

NOTE's notes: A book on Nora Aunor was written decades ago, but a new updated and more comprehensive biography is slowly called for, especially now that books on film and film stars are "in." We'd also love to see a book on female directors.

To the dogs

Americans are/are have always dotted on animal "stars," from Lassie to Mickey, from Trouble to Rob. But 2009 threatens to unveil the biggest number of trained characters, to date.

"Marley and Me" recently hit it big in the theaters, and "Marley" is a puppy.

The current Animation bird no spare rooster in the movie slate around 70 different dogs were used to play various aspects of the 65-lbs doggie character in the comedy film!

Then there's "Beverly Hills Chihuahua," the stars of which are mostly canine (with human voices like Drew Barrymore "voicering" Chris Delquie). Plus "Kitty and the Chipmunks," "Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs," "Land of the Lost," "Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian," "The Fantastic Mr. Fox," etc.

Torn between Chard, Piolo

RC CONCEPCION didn't want to talk about Paolo Pancrati or Jeni, "out of respect" for current leading man Richard Gutierrez.

In two exclusive interviews with Inquirer recently, the stalwart that her top priority was her movie with Chard, "When I Met U" and that she was pushing "Lovers in Paris," her forthcoming soap opera with Piolo, in the back burner.

She released from watching DVDs of "Lovers in Paris" produced by home network ABS-CBN. "I don't want to mix up Divina, my character in 'Lovers' Jenni, my role in 'When I Met U.'"

But fans don't feel that Bernardo is one of country's hottest leading Chard?

"Chard will always special to me," RC pleased. All my respect to them. My wish for them is the best."

She continued: "It's never matter and a matter repudiated Chard, [as] Piolo is one I can learn from, actually He's very good to me. I'm feeling his feelings."

(Report Jun Dag

Charice, Celine first time on free TV

CHARICE PEMPENGCO discovery professionals with international singing icon Celine Dion on free TV in the Philippines. Celine on Charice, through TV host Oprah Winfrey, in her concert Madison Square Garden. They did a duet of Celine's hit single "Because You Love Me." The [illegible] the voice that can [illegible] world. Meet [illegible] vocal of Madison Square, said Celine in her concert. Charice's message

CUCK!

#1 MOVIE IN AMERICA
$27,465,000
The No-Excuses Truth to Understanding the Opposite Sex
OPENS FEB 13
Based on the Worldwide Best-Selling Book featured on Oprah Winfrey Show
Jennifer Aniston Drew Barrymore Scarlett Johansson Jennifer Connelly
Ben Affleck Kevin Connolly Justin Long and Ginnifer Goodwin
he's just not that into you

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ALBUM SIGNING
FEBRUARY 13,2009 FRIDAY
ARANETA COLISEUM 8PM

risyon
a tamang edad.
ikapapanatag ko
kundi pati ng aking kapwa ina,
kapwa tagapag-aruga.
Tungo sa pamilyang panatag,
bayang panatag.
Lactum
Lactum
Lactu
Helps provide

'HIGH OCTANE' EVENT

Pinoy actors Hurtle Mercado, Marvin Dolor Santos (in Boring 'Agaag') and Jon Enver 'Jay' Sidayon pose with "Pacemaker" co-stars Dael Garcia Bernal and Sophie Sihombing and director Lukas Moodysson on the red carpet at the movie's official screening at Ayala Malls, which was a competition or the ongoing Bertie Pilos Festival. Director Moodysson, better known as the accompanied their son to Bertie, more than the screening as "a high octane event — daing ferve."

This addiction called Facebook

MANILA—AS I NOW RETURN TO THE grind of making news of things at home, which of course includes my trips to the grocery store, the bank, and the mall (plus a stop at a favorite uncommon bar), I find myself drawn—my method isn't a partial train job which very few people escape . . . a distinctly unrationed occupation that now takes up a lot of my time.

It's called Facebook.

I can't remember exactly when or how I found myself here . . . where tagging and poking are commonplace . . . where application abound like flavors in a Bird ice bowls or a latte, depending on how you look at it. Where you can brush up on your Jungkook, grapple pits, cyclling, Texas Hold 'Em Poker, or Scrabble. Or like putting other applications I am most guilty of)... play Mob Wars, take care of virtual pets down, and even fight global warming . . . there's a 3D Lifestyle Bible for pagan to take care of everyday . . . or just upload pictures and videos, write notes and messages, and keep connected with the rest of the world.

A lot of my relatives have signed on to Facebook (including cousins in California and on visits to Spain) . . . not to mention colleagues from my past. I've found quite a few classmates and friends from grade school. I even found one beloved sister-teacher!

As wonderful as all this sounds, I must warn you, though—Facebook is very, very addicting.

It's easy to spend hours upon hours just hanging around, waiting for a friend to pop up for a quick chat, or get a one-on-one Scrabble match going on the internet. I have five active matches. My record per match are over-day ish, I've come to Lucy by the way) to feed her, give her water, and throw her a Frisbee. My favorite time-waster is the one that I need to draw, and so there has a sinking deer, rabbit or dog that threatens to destroy the Mission. I've got scrabbled, filled with Cinderella, Disney Princess, and Hot Mommy Shit, and have gotten really, really good on a game called Trivia. I've also spent an inordinate to throttle words and concepts, and am ashamed especially on some of subjects I am clue.

Facebook isn't all fun and games, though. This is one of my chosen avenues of communication, but when I have notes (good or bad) for members of my family, it was one reason of keeping in touch with the cast and crew of "Starbucks" for roll dinner and rehearsals. And I've joined a few causes and groups that are close to my heart (breast cancer support and the World Wildlife Fund to name a couple).

I know of friends that have literally resolved to stay far away from the phone/screen, for whatever reasons. However, I take issue that once you've had a little, you'll want more and more and more. The next thing you know, you're neck deep in blood imprints.

That was the first step to recovery is to admitting that one has an addiction. So . . . my name is Leo Salonga . . . and I am a Facebook addict.

But not on your knees, this is one addiction I don't intend to cure.

Now excuse me, it's time to change my two lie updates.

BACK STORY

Leo Salonga

My virtual pet Lucy reminds me to feed her and throw her a Frisbee... everyday

JOEY Ayala plays the beginning

Organik' music

BACOLOD CITY—SINGER-SONGWRITER Joey Ayala introduced what he called organik music to his audiences at the recent Inhinyeril evening of the 3rd City Bugsk's Inst function.

The performance was part of the "Oh gosh Bicol" project, a series of concerts supported by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

"Go back to your roots. If you don't know one, invent one. This is organik music," said Ayala, who performed using an acoustic guitar and the bagabag, or nose-tongue, Tboli lute. Rhoda Dacuag and Archivile Rinded, Inquirer Northern Luzon

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback:

Choose your Valentine show

EVERY YEAR, Inquirer ENTERTAINMENT helps readers pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists what they have in store for audiences (and a few others things).

Erik Santos

"Pop Icons" (with Pilot Pascual, Ivan Mills, Christian Bautista and Mark Bautista), Feb. 13 (12H Studio, Unapanol. Feb. 14 (Mandarin Hotel, Ortigas, Feb. 23 (Ateneum Coliseum). Call 405-1406

Tiongco Brothers

"8 Valentine's Eve," Feb. 12, RJ Bar, 28 Aguirre St. Bel-Air Makati. Call 899-1650.

Noney Zuniga

"Love is ... Never Ever Say Goodbye" (with guests Mon Dalisay and Jean Rodrigo), Feb. 14, Holiday Hotel, Clark, Pampanga. Call (045) 499-4777.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you mark Valentine's?

Erik Santos: I go out with family and friends.

Raul and Edward Tiongco: We celebrate with our loved ones.

Noney Zuniga: Rest is a luxury for me, so I usually just stay home or go out of town with my family.

What's your most romantic Valentine's Day ever?

Erik: When I surprised my girlfriend by declaring her feelings with flowers and balloons.

Raul and Edward: Every Valentine's Day is romantic.

Noney: Every Heart's Day I spend with my wife is most romantic.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Erik: I'll bring her to a private beach resort, then set up a candlelight dinner with a string quartet playing nearby.

Raul and Edward: Dinner with the loved one in a fancy restaurant, with musicians serenading us.

Noney: Nothing beats good food and music, and the company of my wife.

Who's your fantasy date?

Erik: Angelina Jolie.

Raul and Edward: My fantasies are me singing and dancing with the lovely and sexy Jennifer Lopez.

Noney: That question is for single guys only.

What's the most romantic love song?

Erik: "The Last Time" by Erik Santos.

Raul and Edward: "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing."

Noney: It's still "Never Ever Say Goodbye" by Willy Cruz.

Why should we watch you?

Raul and Edward: We will take you back to your Valentines of yesteryears!

Noney: It's going to be a great show, promise!

Alamid

Feb. 13 (Ulat Restaurant-Lounge, Laong Laya, Bacoor Neuva), Feb. 14 (Ayala City, Roxas Ave.)

Side A

"Love 2 Love 2 Love" (With MYMP and friends), Feb. 15, Araneta Coliseum. Call 401-1406

(12) 2222

When you're not doing a concert, how do you mark Valentine's?

Gary Ignacio Ukkandi (vocals): I take my family out to a nice dinner.

Steven Tiacho (Ukkandi guitarist): Dine out with the family and share with other Valentine lovers.

Joey Limacoco (Side A vocals): Hit a dinner reservation in a new restaurant or school. If on leave (time), my family goes out of town.

What's your most romantic Valentine's Day ever?

Gary: My first Valentine's Day with my wife in 1998.

Steven: Back in college, I was about to enter the classroom when all my classmates stood up and sang "true love" at the top of their voices. When they were back in their seats, I noticed my girlfriend at the back standing. She hugged me and dragged me out of the classroom. We skipped classes that same day. She became my wife.

Joey: After having classes we went to the Rizal Monument for Pearl Jobby Ko coffee. She went to the rest room and before she got back to our table, I placed a number on the saucer of her coffee cup. She thought it was romantic.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Gary: To spend it table any wife anywhere (would be fine, as long as we're together. But Hawaii/Israel would be a romantic place for us.

Steven: To be with someone you love. Just in spontaneous. Planning sometimes ruins the date.

Joey: Dinner by the beach in Amanpulo with my wife and two kids.

What's your fantasy date?

Gary: It's always been my wife. But if I were to pick someone else, it would be Gelli de Belen.

Steven: Anne Hathaway.

Joey: When I was in college, my fantasy date was Phoebe Cates.

What's the most romantic love song?

Gary: "Kiss Long."

Steven: "True Love" and "Still Believe In Love."

Joey: "Forevermore."

Why should we watch you?

Gary: Because we always give our best performance.

Steven: We'll make your day special.

Joey: We prepared a lineup na pang Valentine's Day talaga. Three bands in one night, this is fun!

John "Sweet" Lapus

"My Sweet Valentine," Feb. 14, Tobiko Wine Bar & Restaurant, Roces Mission on the Highway, Quezon City. Call 994-4124.

Isabella

"Valentine Love Celebration," Feb. 14, Hacienda Isabella, Sta. 8 Guinacle, Indang, Cavite. Call 514-7250.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you mark Valentine's?

CHOOSE 14

GARFIELD — By JIM DAVIS

PUGAD BABOY — By PAUL SUNGA

LOVEKNOTS — By ELIZABETH CHOMICKI

DIXIE COMEDY — By STEVEN PABALINAS

ATOMO AND WEBOY — By LYRA GARCELLANO

KIKO MACHINE — By MANNY ARSENA

AL LIRIN — By JOJO ABAÑO

DICK TRACY

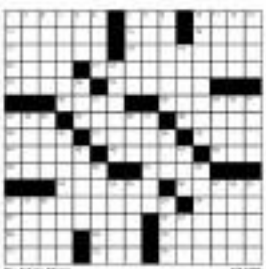
JAMES BOND

BABY BLUES — By JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK — By MARIA COLL

BEN — By DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Adam Mann
New York, NY

ACROSS
1 Start of a quip
7 Sharp
10 Actor Barlow
14 Amateur's remit
15 Mimic
16 Non-surprise
17 Sweeping part
18 Shaping envelope
20 Cops and more
22 Part 2 of quip
23 Tiff
24 Temper
26 Weakest (Comparison from Canada)
28 Archery command to Edith
29 Psychic power of Kreskin, e.g.
30 "Murder, She ___"
32 Roughly size
35 Take off quickly
37 Part 3 of quip
41 Music Bob Marley fancies
44 Elderly Jurassic fish
45 Antelope country
46 In addition
47 Ripped apart
51 100-mile event, briefly
52 Quiet to the Greeks
53 Language of Lucknow
54 Tyrosine and thyroid
56 Part 4 of quip
64 Tooth, to an ogre
65 Legacy
66 Pitch-in
67 Hobby
68 Singer Keaton
69 Bride (from)
70 Be inside of
71 Bird's nest
72 End of quip

DOWN
1 Jackie Robinson
2 Presents a solution
3 Nearby location, once referred
4 Mortgage condition, often
5 Tide formers
6 Legal bargain
7 Title (with)
8 Time capsule or shield
9 Ancient
10 Asian evergreen
11 Jupiter-Second wind
12 Be worthy of
13 Lion's mother
19 Commotion
21 Small naval vessels
25 Desert blooms
27 Dog-sled driver
31 Cadre or faction
33 Bundles of bones
34 Goddess of Lanka
36 Lush
38 Dining or commotion
39 Tool-shaped
40 Tool-shaped and now Dallas
42 Tiff
43 Bedtime or Lanka
47 Ripped
48 Ancient Greek colonnade
49 Tool-shaped
50 Tool-shaped and now Dallas
55 Lush
57 Dining or commotion
60 Tool-shaped
61 Tool-shaped and now Dallas
62 Tool-shaped
63 Tool-shaped

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

FOUR-WORD TODAY: Don't take reckless gambling odds because you're sure to win. Be serious about your career, and you'll be successful. Be kinder to those around you. Remember that you have a talent for making all sides of a situation clear, plus you're a persuasive writer who could write letters to the editor. Birthdate of: Mandy Moore, actress; Michael Knowlton, artist; Jim Croce, pop singer.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	9			3			6	
2	3						7	1
		6				2		
			7		8			
1								8
			5		9			
		8				5		
5	1						9	4
	7			2			3	

Difficulty Level ★★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	7	2	5	9	1	4	8	6
5	6	8	6	7	4	3	1	3
4	8	1	6	2	3	5	9	7
9	3	5	4	1	8	7	6	2
7	1	4	2	6	9	3	5	8
8	2	6	7	3	5	9	4	1
1	4	3	9	8	7	6	2	5
6	5	8	3	4	2	1	7	9
2	9	7	1	5	6	8	3	4

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7:00 PM

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
9:30 PM

THE PODIUM

VALKYRIE

WHEN I MET U

LATE SCREENINGS

CINEMA 1

VALKYRIE

LUZON

VISAYAS • MINDANAO

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GREENBELT 3

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AYALA CENTER CEBU

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glorietta

At the Malls

GLORIETTA
Jazz Piano Featuring Ilan
February 13, 8:30pm, Activity Center

GREENBELT
The Diner's Pre-Valentine Concert
February 13, Greenbelt 5 Park

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Opera Philippina Orchestra
February 14, Activity Center

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Felipe Philharmonic Orchestra
February 14, 8:30pm, Outdoor Activity Court, The Terraces

MARKET! MARKET!
A Love Affair Valentine's Day Fest
February 14, Activity Center

BONIFACIO HIGH STREET
Flower Drop
February 14, 4:30pm, Bonifacio High Street

TRINOMA
I Love Movies
February 14, 7:00pm, Activity Center

ONSTAGE
I Love You Because
February 13-March 8

AYALA MUSEUM
Amorsolo's Women: Conception & Renewal
Opening: until March 8, 2009
at 3rd Floor Gallery

Please Drop
at the Trinoma Park
Valentine's Day
Where thousands of youth
fall from the sky for an
exceptional Valentine's
experience
Feb.14 / 5:00PM

Rock in Love: A Valentine
Concert with Barbie Almalbis,
Jett Pangan, Redolo Mo'El,
Jay Durias and Sonata Music
Ensemble
Feb.14 / 5PM / Activity Center

The Company Live with
Sweet Salonga & the
Filharmonik Orchestra
Feb.21 / 5PM / Activity Center

Tri-Noma

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MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 SEVEN POUNDS	6 PINK PANTHER 2
2 VALKYRIE	7 MY BLOODY VALENTINE
3 QUEER SOCIETY FILM FESTIVAL	8 UNDERWORLD 3
4 PUSH	9 MARLEY & ME
5 WHEN I MET YOU	10 INKHEART

ERMITA

1 PUSH	
2 PINK PANTHER 2	6 INKHEART
3 VALKYRIE	7 MARLEY & ME
4 UNDERWORLD 3	8 MY BLOODY VALENTINE
5 WHEN I MET YOU	9 SEVEN POUNDS

METRO EAST

1 PINK PANTHER 2	5 UNDERWORLD 3
2 WHEN I MET YOU	6 INKHEART
3 VALKYRIE	7 MARLEY & ME
4 PUSH	8 MY BLOODY VALENTINE

NOVALICHES

1 WHEN I MET YOU	4 MUTAS
2 VALKYRIE	
3 PINK PANTHER 2	

PIONEER

1 WHEN I MET YOU	3 PUSH
2 VALKYRIE	4 PINK PANTHER 2

QUEERIOSITY International Film Festival '09

STA. ROSA

1 WHEN I MET YOU	1 UNDERWORLD 3
2 VALKYRIE	2 WHEN I MET YOU
3 THE HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY	3 BRIDE WARS
4 PINK PANTHER 2	4 THE ABANDONED

LIPA

DASMARINAS

1 WHEN I MET YOU	1 WHEN I MET YOU
2 VALKYRIE	2 VALKYRIE
3 THE HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY	3 THE HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY
4 PINK PANTHER 2	4 PINK PANTHER 2

IMUS

ANGELES

1 VALKYRIE	3 THE ABANDONED
2 WHEN I MET YOU	4 PINK PANTHER 2

STARMILLS

1 VALKYRIE	4 PINK PANTHER 2
2 WHEN I MET YOU	5 UNDERWORLD 3
3 BRIDE WARS	6 TRANSPORTER 3

BACOLOD

1 WHEN I MET YOU	1 WHEN I MET YOU
2 UNDERWORLD 3	2 UNDERWORLD 3
3 VALKYRIE	3 VALKYRIE
4 BRIDE WARS	4 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY
5 INKHEART	5 INKHEART
6 MY BLOODY VALENTINE	6 YES MAN

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

METRO MANILA THEATER ASSOCIATION

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